

A HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

An Introduction to the Historical Method

Fred Gladstone Bratton

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Here is the full story of the origin and development of the Bible as a human document. It is the only single volume to cover all the material essential for an introduction to the Bible through the historical method. In these fact-filled pages, a distinguished biblical scholar and teacher explains how the Bible was written, how the separate books were gathered and canonized, how this canon was translated (and often distorted) into English and how men have read (and misread) the Bible ever since. All the most recent archaeological discoveries are incorporated into the work, and the whole is presented in non-technical language.

Today's trend to see the Bible as a supposedly unified and coherent theology, with its neglect of the historical position, receives critical examination.

Dr. Bratton, chairman of the Department of Biblical Literature at Springfield (Mass.) College, is a champion of historical criticism. "In spite of the publication of the Revised Standard Version and other modern translations," he writes, "the fact remains that the Bible is still an ancient, Oriental book. . . It

must be interpreted with reference to its own time and place and not taken out of context. One must hold the fact firmly in mind that these authors were not consciously writing 'The Bible' nor were they writing for the 20th century."

No other volume in the field of biblical literature embraces the material here offered. The book is arranged in five parts: 1. The Archaeological Backgrounds of the Old Testament; 2. The Making of the Old Testament; 3. The Making of the New Testament; 4. The Transmission of the Bible; 5. A Brief History of the Higher Criticism. Realizing the increasingly important role played by archaeology in illuminating biblical material and in demonstrating that both the Old and the New Testaments are heir to previous civilizations, the author surveys for the general reader the archaeological discoveries that relate to the Bible. The story of the canonization of the Bible is an important part of the book, and special attention is given to the extracanonical literature of both the Old and the New Testaments.

The reader is made familiar with all the types of literature in the Bible. This is followed by a discussion of the various English translations down to — and beyond — the Revised Standard Version. In the closing part, the author has provided for the reader what is perhaps the only complete history, in book form, of biblical study through the historical method.

For thirty-three years Fred Gladstone Bratton has been teaching the history and literature of religion not only to students in college classrooms but also to audiences of laymen throughout the United States and Canada. He has been Professor of the History and Literature of Religion at Springfield College in Massachusetts since 1931 and is now chairman of the department.

After graduating from Mount Union College (Alliance, Ohio) in 1920 and receiving an S.T.B. from Boston University School of Theology in 1923, Dr. Bratton did graduate work at Harvard University and at the University of Berlin. He received a Ph.D. in 1927 from Boston University, where he remained until 1930 as Associate Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature at the School of Theology. From 1930 to 1931 he was an Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Rochester.

Dr. Bratton, widely known as the author of *LEGACY OF THE LIBERAL SPIRIT* (1943), has also written a briefer study of *ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HOLY LAND* (1931) and has contributed to *NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES: A Symposium*, edited by E. P. Booth (1942), *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Journal of Bible and Religion*, *Christian Century*, and *Christian Register*.

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Preface

In spite of the publication of the Revised Standard Version and other modern translations, the fact remains that the Bible is an ancient, oriental book. In order to understand it properly the reader must know something about its origin, history, and character. He must, in other words, have some guidance in his approach to the Scripture.

There are two ways of studying biblical literature: one deals solely with the content of the Scripture as a religious message; the other is concerned also with its composition, collection, canonization, and transmission. This book belongs to the latter class.

As a book *about* the Bible, this volume is designed to supplement, not to take the place of, the study of the Scripture itself. Reading the Bible, it goes without saying, is primary, but for a complete understanding of biblical literature it is necessary to know the facts about the Bible. "Who," "how," "when," "where," and "why" are just as important to the student of the Bible as "what."

There are also two schools of thought on how to read the classics. One school says that great books are universal in their content and therefore can and should be read *in toto* without being introduced, explained, or streamlined by professor or editor. Those who follow this school lament the present tendency to read *about* the Bible or Plato instead of reading the text itself. Text, they say, is sacrificed for context. The student is content with reading "the story of philosophy" and biographical sketches of the philosophers without familiarizing himself with what the philosophers actually

wrote. To atone for this superficiality, some instructors have instituted courses in reading great books minus introductory notes and critical apparatus.

This point of view is thoroughly justified as a corrective of our quick-culture age; but it must be remembered that the classics (including the Bible) were written in another age, whose terms and concepts have changed with time. The twentieth-century reader is not qualified to read ancient literature until he has been oriented in the historical background and cultural context of any given book. Certain books are admittedly classic and therefore timeless but nevertheless are filled with terms, allusions, and concepts that are simply unintelligible to a modern reader who is not provided with the necessary explanatory notes. To put the Bible, for instance, into the hands of a young person without benefit of historical introduction and to expect him to understand it on the grounds that "great literature speaks for itself" is to invite confusion and frustration.

People are told to "read the Bible" as if it were a popular magazine! If all of the Bible were like the Twenty-Third Psalm, the layman could read it with a certain facility, but for most of the material in the Scripture the reader needs a suitable orientation in the authorship, dating, characteristics, purpose, and milieu. Such, at least, is the point of view of this book. It cannot replace a reading of the Bible itself, but it may perhaps make that reading more intelligible by supplying information in some of the areas not always adequately covered by textbooks in this field. Those areas have to do with the background and origin of biblical literature, the formation and canonization of the books, the story of the translation of the Bible, and the history of interpretation. It is hoped that this volume will serve not only as a text for courses

in biblical literature but as a useful tool for the general reader.

It is not within the province of the present work to take up in detail the history of Israel, the teachings of the prophets, the life and teachings of Jesus, the career of Paul, and the beginnings of the Christian movement. The reader will find, however, a brief description of the contents of the important books of both the Old and New Testaments.

With the general reader and undergraduate student in mind, I have employed as far as possible a nontechnical vocabulary, keeping the documentation at a minimum and avoiding Hebrew and Greek quotations. Those who wish to pursue the various areas of study in greater detail are referred to the Bibliography. The expert will no doubt find more than one item that is not up to date or is entirely missing. Opinions in the field of Biblical Criticism change so rapidly that it is impossible to include the latest views. That is the function of the professional journals. It is really not of too much consequence for the student or general reader to learn that Professor X has just dated Hammurabi at 1790 B.C. instead of 1850 B.C. or that Professor Y has concluded that Ephesians was not written by Paul; for by the time the news is printed others have redated Hammurabi and have given Ephesians back to Paul. In a survey such as this we can only hope to review the main lines of biblical study and make the reader conscious of the chief critical problems.

Having explained the nature and purpose of the book, I hasten to point out that it contains nothing particularly new or original by way of research. My only aim is to offer a representative introduction to biblical study. Without proper guideposts, the student either will be confused by the forks and detours of critical study or will never get beyond the

blind alley of pious literalism. For some, depending on background and previous training, the decision to take the route of historical and critical study is a painful experience, but, once the choice is made, there is an increasing satisfaction in the vistas encountered along the way.

In the preparation of the manuscript, as also in my thinking and teaching, I find myself indebted to many scholars — particularly Adolf Harnack and Adolf Deissmann, under whom I studied at the University of Berlin; E. F. Scott of Union Theological Seminary; S. J. Case of the University of Chicago; and my former teacher and later colleague, Robert H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University. More specifically I wish to thank Professor Morton S. Enslin of St. Lawrence University and Professor Ernest Cassara of Tufts University, both of whom read the manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions for its improvement. Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Alan Levensohn of the Beacon Press for his generous help in the preparation of the manuscript.

FRED GLADSTONE BRATTON

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Introduction

The Bible and the Twentieth-Century Mind

The general reader who is unfamiliar with biblical research may, upon picking up a book in this field, experience a certain amount of disillusionment over the conjectural nature of the discussion. The words "perhaps," "probably," "about," "presumably," "theory," "hypothesis," and "problem" are encountered on every page of his reading. It must be admitted that this cautious approach can be overdone. Some scholars are so afraid of oversimplification that they never seem to have the courage to end a sentence until they have qualified every observation.

On the other hand, there is a necessary and inevitable uncertainty about biblical studies owing to the very nature of the task. If the Bible had been written in English or if we had the original autographs of the Scripture, there would be no problem at all in regard to the text. But this is unfortunately not the case. Also, the paucity of information about the circumstances surrounding the writing of the Bible and the obscurity of events occurring in antiquity add to the conjectural nature of the treatment.

The absence of the original books of the Bible and the uncertainty attached to the history of the text make necessary a type of study called Criticism, of which there are two classes. The Lower or Textual Criticism is a study of the text of the

Bible with a view to determining the original wording as far as is possible from the comparative analysis of manuscript copies. Between the time of the original composition and the earliest manuscripts, as well as during the successive manuscript stages, numerous changes were made, both deliberate and accidental. So the textual critic is concerned primarily with the integrity of the text.

Higher or Historical Criticism deals with the more comprehensive problems of the authorship, dates, unity, sources, and general character of the books. The work of the higher critic has gone hand in hand with the advance of the modern scientific method and the development of archaeological and historical studies, and it has in turn produced a more intelligent study of the Bible.

The modern approach to the Bible, in fact, is a result of the development of several disciplines: archaeology, criticism, history, comparative religion, linguistics, and the biological and physical sciences. Archaeological discoveries have thrown much light on the cultural backgrounds of the Hebrew religion, unearthed Babylonian sources of Hebrew traditions, provided confirmation of biblical history, and enriched our knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages. The science of Textual Criticism has enabled us to arrive at a closer approximation of the original text, and the study of Higher Criticism has greatly enhanced our knowledge of the origin, order, authority, and authenticity of all the books of the Bible. Research in the history of religions and in comparative religion has shown that Judaism and early Christianity cannot be divorced from their environment and that there is a certain amount of religious syncretism in both. Our improved knowledge of the ancient languages has helped us to understand what the Bible intended to say and has compelled

a continuous and thoroughgoing revision of the English text. Finally, nineteenth-century science has forced upon the Christian world a more vitalistic and evolutionary interpretation of the Scripture.

The Bible as a Library

From these branches of learning have emerged several important criteria or principles for the modern approach to the Scripture. The first is the recognition that the Bible is a collection of books consisting of various forms of literature. The idea that the Bible is *a book* is comparatively modern. It is not one book but a library of sixty-six books, written by almost as many authors during a period of one thousand years and on three continents. Ancient authorities were more cognizant of this fact than later writers, as seen in Jerome's Vulgate (ca. 400 A.D.), where the title "Bibliotheca Divina" (*divine library*) is used.

But in spite of this diversity there is a certain unity in the Scripture. The Bible is the continuous story of the religious growth of the Hebrew and early Christian people. Containing, as it does, the history and literature of these two religious movements, the Bible shows a steady continuity of theme. The integration of these sixty-six books is also seen in their religious message. The Bible is a revelation of moral and spiritual truth unsurpassed in all the writings of the ages in its ability to satisfy the religious needs of humanity. That message in essence and in its best expression states that at the heart of the universe there is goodness, that the stars in their courses are on the side of right, that God is our Father and all men are brothers. It teaches the sacred worth of the in-

dividual, the paramount importance of personal integrity, and the principle of service to others as the key to happiness.

Aside from any authoritative pronouncement of church or council, the Bible has held its place by virtue of its intrinsic appeal to conscience, insight, and reason. The books were accepted in the minds of the people as Scripture long before they were declared by councils to be canonical. Their inspiration was genuinely felt by their readers long before they were pronounced by the church to be infallibly inspired.

Inspiration Redefined

To speak of inspiration raises a problem for the twentieth-century reader. Are all the books of the Bible equally inspired? A careful scrutiny of the contents will readily convince one that there is a difference in the degree of inspiration. Lofty spiritual sentiment of the most inspiring character is found alongside of unworthy and decidedly uninspiring material. There is a vast difference, for instance, between the vengeful imprecations of Psalm 109 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. Consider the disparity between the Song of Solomon and the Sermon on the Mount in moral and spiritual values. The conclusion of Ecclesiastes that "man has no pre-eminence above the beast" is certainly not on a plane with the Fourth Gospel, which says: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

Clearly the books of the Bible are not all on one level of inspiration. There are high peaks and low valleys. The traditional view regards every *verse* in the Bible as equally inspired, a presumption implied in the King James Version, in which the editors set up each sentence as an independent para-

graph with a number. This arrangement gave to biblical usage a stilted and mechanical aspect from which it has never fully recovered. In this connection, the time-honored practice of preaching from a text might well be called into question as a form of bibliolatry not in accord with the intention of the original authors of the biblical books, which, as a matter of fact, had no verses. The Revised Version (1881-85), followed by the American Standard Version (1901) and the Revised Standard Version (1946-52), improved on the Authorized Version by arranging the material into paragraphs according to content. A preacher would do well, then, to prepare a sermon around a paragraph or a theme rather than around an isolated text.

But to pursue the problem still further: *What is meant by inspiration?* If by inspiration it is meant that the authors of the various books were passive instruments automatically and miraculously inspired by God to write and, therefore, were incapable of error, there are many who will question the inspiration of the Bible, because it clearly contains factual errors, anachronisms, unscientific ideas of the universe and unworthy ideas of God and man.

The historical or critical approach to the Bible has rendered the older view of inspiration untenable. The traditional interpretation assumed that since every sentence in the Bible had been dictated by God there could be no possibility of error. But contradictions, scientific errors, absurd statements, exaggerations, and immature views occur throughout the Bible and were detected by early church fathers, such as Origen, in the third century. In I Samuel 17:49, for instance, we are told that David slew Goliath. In II Samuel 21:19 another account of the same battle tells us that it was Elhanan who slew Goliath. Then a later redactor in Chronicles 20:5,

noting the discrepancy, records that Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath! Whole volumes have been devoted to reporting inaccuracies, contradictions, and mistakes in the Bible, and it is not our purpose to labor that point here. The existence of these errors, however, does necessitate a new definition of inspiration.

On the other hand, the men who wrote these books were human and therefore capable of error; yet they were, for the most part, closely akin to the spirit of God and had unusual spiritual genius in their grasp of reality. They were able to express truths that stand the test of time and inspire mankind in any age or place. If this can be called inspiration, then it can be said that the Bible is really inspired. Whatever has the quality of insight that inspires one to a nobler conception of life is inspiring, whether it is regarded as "inspired" or not. Conversely, whatever degrades one's ideas of God, man, and human life is palpably not inspiring.

On this basis the Bible emerges as a truly inspiring book. Consider such mountain peaks of inspiration as the following: "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12); "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:33); "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4); "So faith, hope, and love abide; these three, but the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13); "He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4); "But let justice roll down like wa-

ters and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24); "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6); "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8); "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps. 23:1). These teachings are *inspiring* whether they are "inspired" or not!

The Bible as a Progressive Discovery of Truth

Another criterion for an intelligent approach to the Bible is the recognition of the Bible as a progressive discovery of truth. Including, as it does, one thousand years of history, the Bible shows a steady growth or change in its ideas of God, man, and the moral life. Within that millennium one is prepared to find vast cultural differences and changes in life and thought. The Bible is not a preordained, supernatural deposit of truth but a record of the experience of man in his long search for that truth.

By reading chronologically, one can trace within the covers of the Bible a discernible progress in the conception of God. True, this is not an orderly or straight-line growth, proceeding from one level of thought to the next. The long-term progression includes retrogressions, and earlier phases of thought continue to exist in later periods.

In the earliest sources there are traces of polytheism, as seen in the use of plural names for deity. One of the authors of the Book of Genesis described God anthropomorphically, walking and talking as a human being. God is depicted as a jealous deity and an angry potentate, commanding the mur-

der of women and children. Worship of this deity was by sacrifice of animals as an atonement for sin.

The God of Moses was a tribal deity, the protector of the Hebrew people. Entering the Promised Land, the Hebrews conquered the Canaanites, but the Canaanite religions conquered them, so to speak. The worship of Jehovah was confused with that of Baal, the Canaanite agricultural deity, and the Hebrew religion became syncretistic. Elijah later established the supremacy of Jehovah over Baal and recalled the people to the worship of their God.

The eighth-century B.C. prophet Amos declared that Jehovah was a God of justice and righteousness. He was followed by Hosea, who showed that Jehovah was also a God of mercy and compassion. Isaiah saw God as a spiritual being, a creature of awe and majesty. Jeremiah enhanced this growing conception of deity still further in his portrayal of God as a being with whom one could commune. Second Isaiah climaxes this process with his teaching of universalism ("Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth," 45:22). Deuteronomy clarifies the monotheistic principle in the Shema (6:4): "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. . . ." Still later, Jesus speaks of God as a loving, heavenly Father (Matt. 6:9). Finally, we encounter Paul telling the Athenians of that spiritual presence "in whom we live, move, and have our being" (Acts 17:22-28).

The progressive nature of the Bible is apparent also in the ideas of morality and human destiny as one proceeds from earlier to later writings.

The implication of this approach is that the materials must be seen as reflections of different stages of cultural growth and therefore as unequal in worth from the standpoint of religious maturity. To trace these changing ideas through

the Bible in their development from elementary beginnings to their consummation is to recognize the importance of chronological order and historical sequence, an approach that earlier interpreters missed.

It must always be borne in mind that the present order of the books in the English Bible is not chronological but topical, and the first business of the scholar is to ascertain as accurately as he can the order of the books from the standpoint of their original composition.

Each Book in Its Own Setting

Another cardinal principle of biblical study is that of reading each book in the light of its own historical setting. The book must be interpreted with reference to its own time and place and must not be taken out of its context. One must hold the fact firmly in mind that these authors were not consciously writing "the Bible," nor were they writing for the twentieth century. Their message was primarily for their own time. If they had written for the distant future, their meaning would not have been intelligible to their immediate readers. Isaiah was concerned with the problems of his own people in the eighth century B.C. Paul's letters to the Corinthians were written to meet certain specific needs in Corinth in 55 A.D. In other words, we must first ascertain what the author intended to say to his original audience.

Having done that, we are qualified to inquire into the message of the book for us today, for in many instances there is a teaching of permanent as well as of transient value. Along with Isaiah's condemnation of the ceremonial system and idolatry of the Hebrews is a profound description of a

peaceful world, the hope of humanity (Isa. 2:4). Along with Paul's discussion of the place of women and married life, totally irrelevant for our day, is found his lofty sermon on love (I Cor. 13).

This, then, is an indispensable method of the modern interpreter: first, to relate the book or chapter to its original setting with the idea of finding out what the author intended to say to his immediate audience; and then to extract from that passage whatever meaning there is for us today, always being frank to distinguish between the two approaches. We must be careful to disconnect our own inferences from the original truth of the passage. We must recognize that the abiding elements in the Bible are sometimes found in a transient and imperfect setting. Jesus, for instance, as a Jew of the first century, may have believed that the earth was flat and that the world was soon coming to an end, but the recognition of that fact need not detract from the abiding worth of the Sermon on the Mount.

This is the only intelligent way to "read the Bible"; it frees the interpreter from the necessity of accepting or teaching what he knows to be untrue. The author of the book of Joshua asserted that the sun stood still. He and his readers knew little or nothing of astronomy. Such a passage is merely the reflection of a pre-scientific age. But this acknowledgment need not minimize or detract from whatever religious teaching that book has for the twentieth century.

The Bible as a Book of Religion

Another principle of modern biblical study is the recognition of what the Bible is and what it is not. The Bible is a

book of religion. It can be studied as literature, but its authors were not *littérateurs* and its purpose is not literary. To approach the Bible with the literary criterion in mind would be to miss the forest for the trees. True, the Bible contains passages which rank high as literary gems, but its *raison d'être* is not its rhetorical form.

For that matter, the beautiful style of the King James Bible has been acclaimed far out of proportion to its worth. In fact, there is nothing more difficult to read aloud than the King James Bible. The influence of the Authorized Version on English literature for two centuries or more was tremendous, and it is indeed fortunate that it was written during a period when the English language had reached a peak. But it would be a mistake to read the Authorized Version as a stylistic model for twentieth-century usage. To admire the King James Bible for its archaisms, however proverbial and felicitous, is to remove the Bible altogether from contemporary life.

Is the Bible to be admired as an object of antiquity, or should it be made to come alive for our day? The books of the Bible were originally written in a colloquial style. The Authorized Version also was written by and for the people of the seventeenth century. Those who devote themselves exclusively to the King James Version for the sake of church tradition and for aesthetic reasons seem not to be interested in making the Scripture relevant for our age.

By the same token, the Bible can also be studied as history with great profit, but it is not a book of history. It contains incidental history, but it is history with a didactic purpose. It is history undifferentiated from myth.

The chief value of the Bible lies in its moral principles and spiritual guidance. To regard it as authoritative in any

other field is to fly in the face of modern knowledge. The Bible is not a textbook in science. Its world view is that of the childhood of the race, and this primitive cosmology is seen in all its references to the physical world. The earth is conceived as flat and stationary. The sky is a canopy or vault through whose windows the rain falls. The sun, moon, and stars are contained within this vault. Beneath the earth is Sheol, the realm of the dead. This world and the creatures in it, according to the Scripture, were made in six days. The world in which the Bible was written was one in which human destiny was determined by the stars, sickness was caused by demon possession, the dead were raised, angels stirred the waters of a pool for the healing of the sick, and the Red Sea was parted.

Many literalists, like Augustine, insist that "Scripture gives no false information" and that if it conflicts with science, so much the worse for science. But others, confronted with the vast discrepancy between the biblical world view and modern knowledge, can distinguish also between the passing and the permanent, between the abiding values of the Bible and their transient setting. They know that changes in civilization do not touch the vital and basic experiences of man. The outmoding of world views cannot belittle the permanence of the Scripture in its moral and spiritual values, its timeless aspirations and deathless convictions. The discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, of Pasteur, Darwin, and Einstein do not in any way impair the universal validity of faith, hope, and love.

Being Honest with the Bible

As a corollary of this approach to the Bible, there is a final principle of interpretation: the necessity of being honest with the Bible. We must take it for what it says and not for what we would like it to say. The translator has no right to inject into the text the slightest hint of his own point of view or that of any school of thought. (Fortunately, the translators of the King James Version, the American Standard Version, and the Revised Standard Version have been men of scholarly integrity and have been faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek wording as far as they could understand its meaning.)

The same cannot be said, however, of the reader who distorts the text in order to lend support to a particular theological or moral slant. Preachers often spiritualize or allegorize the Scripture, finding in it mystical and mysterious meanings that were obviously not intended by the author. Conversely, a literalist will read as factual history what was intended as a parable with a religious meaning. The Book of Jonah, for instance, is the most profound expression of universalism in the Old Testament with the exception of Second Isaiah. It is a parabolic tract against Jewish nationalism. Jonah, who had wanted to be a prophet with a mission, runs away from God's will and is swallowed by the whale. Given his second chance, he goes to Nineveh and preaches repentance. The Ninevites accept his message and repent, but he resents the idea that they should receive salvation, whereupon God rebukes Jonah for his narrowness. Israel, likewise, had a sense of world mission but did not carry it out. She was taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Given her second chance, she only with-

drew into a more bigoted and exclusive nationalism. This prophetic message is completely lost on the literalist, who sees only the miracle of the whale swallowing Jonah.

But, to return to our caution against overspiritualization, there is the danger of reading into a parable allegorical details that are not implied at all. Nothing is more harmful to the study of the Bible than this extension of parabolic interpretation to include every detail of the story. Usually there is one central truth in a parable, and to go beyond that by spiritualizing all the minor details of the story is unwarranted.

If the reader will take the Bible for what it says, carefully distinguishing between his own views and the text itself, he will be saved much embarrassment. The ancient solution of the problem of miracle and prescientific material was to resort to allegory. Many people today hold to this method. More recent interpreters tried to harmonize all biblical passages with modern thought by the process of rationalism. They tried to save the text by logical explanation. It is possible, they would say, for the Red Sea to be parted by winds at certain times of the year. Recently a nationally known magazine ran a story by a writer who claimed that Joshua could have been correct in saying that the sun stood still and brought astronomical evidence to prove the point.

This type of intellectual interpretation is worse than uninformed literalism. It is a form of bibliolatry that attempts to square the Bible with science, and, for those who assume biblical infallibility, it offers an apparent reconciliation of the conflict between the scriptural world view and modern scientific knowledge.

Once the reader could pick up the Bible and not be bothered by the discrepancy between ancient mentality and modern knowledge. But today the informed reader has to take a

stand on this issue. He recognizes the Bible for what it said at the time of its composition and is frank to label a passage as untrue, unworthy, and uninspired, if that is necessary. When he reads that God made woman out of man's rib, that there was a world flood that drowned all creatures but those who were in the ark, that the serpent literally spoke to Eve, that God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone, that God gave tremendous strength to Samson because he did not cut his hair or shave, and that Methuselah lived 969 years, he does not have to allegorize, harmonize, or take the Bible literally. He simply says: "That is what the passage says and that is what the author evidently believed, but as for me, I cannot go along in the world as if Copernicus, Newton, and Darwin never existed. I cannot live in a world of whimsicality and chance, cosmic lawlessness and divine caprice. If I must make the choice between miracle and law, I follow law."

The modern interpreter, however, does not stop there. He is quick to see the permanent in the midst of the transient, the timeless in the midst of the temporal. He knows that, when it comes to the fundamentals of human experience, the elemental needs of mankind, the moral and spiritual values, and the basic virtues of life, the Bible speaks with authority. He also knows that it is not enough to approach the Bible scientifically. A mere intellectual understanding of the Scripture is inadequate. One can have an encyclopedic knowledge of the Bible and still lack an appreciation of its rich religious message. Furthermore, a mere negative technique that succeeds only in ruling out former views can miss the very soul of the Bible by its intellectualism. Of this the modern scholar is profoundly aware.

These, then, are the criteria to be applied in the modern approach to biblical literature: recognizing the Bible as a col-

lection of books, discovering within them degrees of inspiration, tracing progressive development of ideas, placing each book in its historical setting, distinguishing between the original message of the book and its possible relevance for our day, being honest with the content of each passage as far as its meaning can be learned, and seeing the Bible as primarily a book of religion and as authoritative in that field.

Part One

Archaeological Backgrounds of the Old
Testament

Chapter One

Babylonian Parallels to Old Testament Traditions

1. Archaeology and the Bible

The historical approach to the study of religion has produced the criterion that no religion can be appraised, nor can its scriptures be interpreted, apart from an accurate knowledge of the cultural, historical, and religious background of that religion. The environmental study of Hebrew history has therefore emerged simultaneously with the growth of the science of archaeology. In supplying the data regarding the milieu of the early Hebrew religion and its sacred writings, archaeology has performed a most conspicuous service.

Our understanding of the early Hebrew writings would be woefully inadequate without a knowledge of Babylonian records. It is here that archaeology has made itself the greatest ally of biblical study. Discoveries of the tablets, monuments, and papyri in the Near East have made it possible for us to reconstruct the background of the Bible and to appreciate the world out of which it came.

The contribution of archaeological discoveries has worked two ways: we have been forced to give up some deeply embedded traditions related to biblical history; and, on the other hand, many biblical data that have been under suspicion by the critics have been accurately verified. The science of archaeology has therefore come as a fresh wind

blowing through the pages of the Scripture, clearing away the mists and clarifying the air. Obscure references have been illumined, and missing links in the chain of religious history have been restored. Many a sweeping statement of a nineteenth-century scholar has been completely discredited by the twentieth-century findings of archaeology.

It would be erroneous, however, to think that the Bible is to be wholly confirmed or wholly disproved by archaeology. There is such a thing as becoming too enthusiastic about any particular science. Archaeology is only one of several disciplines in the historical and cultural approach to religion. Its function is corroborative, corrective, and illustrative. It has proved to be of inestimable value in the process of orientation, enabling us to read the Bible with more historical perspective.

Mysterious, semifabulous names, vaguely reminiscent of unknown or forgotten empires, have taken on new meaning, as the life, art, and spiritual aspirations of the dead past have been resurrected. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, only a few mounds of dirt remained to remind one of the Chaldees, and an uncertain reference in the Bible was all that was known of the Hittites; but soon thereafter great cities were to rise from the dust, and the dry bones of ancient monarchs were to take on flesh and blood. Thus science has not only reduced distances but has foreshortened the dimensions of time. A magic carpet carries the ancient procession before our eyes — the magic carpet of archaeology.

2. Unlocking the Doors to the Ancient World

According to most anthropologists, civilization probably arose in the fertile valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

It is logical to suppose that human progress would occur first along the rivers of the warm countries. At any rate, the earliest deposits of civilized life are being found in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Take a map of the ancient world of the Near East. With Jerusalem as the center and with a radius of eight hundred miles, draw a circle. That circle constitutes the gold mine of archaeology, for it includes Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and Greece. From the religious as well as the ethnic standpoint, Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine are of the greatest interest to us, and it is these countries that have made excavation a romance and an adventure. But, before we tell the story of the modern discoveries and show their significance for biblical literature, we must explain how the archaeologists were able to read the inscriptions of these unknown peoples.

The secrets of Babylonia and Egypt were inscribed on two famous stones, and when these carvings were deciphered, the doors to antiquity were unlocked.

Champollion and the Rosetta Stone

One of the by-products of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt was the discovery in 1799 of the Rosetta Stone, which derives its name from the town where one of the French officers found it. This common block of black basalt, measuring forty-five by twenty-eight inches, was the master-key that opened the gates to one of the greatest civilizations of antiquity. Without it we should still be ignorant of the story of Egypt, and the monuments of Thebes, Karnak, and Luxor would still be as inscrutable as the Sphinx itself. But, because it was found and interpreted, our knowledge has received incalculable enrichment, and this small slab has become one of the most important objects in the British Museum.

The stone contains a trilingual inscription, with the lower register in Greek, the middle in Demotic script, and the upper in an unknown language. The Demotic was a development from the older cursive style of Egyptian writing and was in use after 900 B.C. The Greek section, of course, could be read, and it was found to be a priestly decree of thanksgiving addressed to the king, Ptolemy V, in 196 B.C. But what of the top register?

In 1801 the British came into possession of the Egyptian antiquities found by Napoleon's scholars, and the Rosetta Stone was placed in the British Museum. Thomas Young, the first authority to arrive at any conclusions regarding the text, deciphered the name of Ptolemy; but for the most part the stone remained a riddle for eighteen years. Then a French scholar, François Champollion, began to study it. The hieroglyph (for that was the writing of the top section) was at first completely baffling, but Champollion resolved to "fight it out on this line" until he either died or reached the solution. He worked on the assumption that the three sections represented different versions of the same message and that the upper register was the oldest. He brought to his task a knowledge of Coptic, a late Egyptian dialect, and, by a comparative analysis of the upper registers with their Coptic equivalents of the Greek characters, he succeeded in translating the hieroglyphics and soon thereafter gave to the world a new language. Champollion really sacrificed his life for this cause: he died shortly after of overwork. In this way, the door to the treasure-room of Egyptian antiquities was opened for all time; and discovery after discovery followed, down to the greatest of them all — the tomb of Tutankhamon — just a century later.

Rawlinson Finds the Key to Babylonia

The Babylonians, like the Egyptians, originally used picture writing, in which each picture represented an idea, but this system was later modified to make writing easier, and cuneiform (wedge-shaped) characters were used. The Persians simplified the cuneiform method by making an alphabet, and several Persian rulers wrote cuneiform inscriptions in three languages. For many years the scholars studied these inscriptions with little or no success. It remained for Henry C. Rawlinson to decipher first the Persian and later the Babylonian cuneiform. Rawlinson had learned Persian in India, and, when he was dispatched to Persia as a British army officer, he busied himself with the inscriptions that were carved on the rocks of Behistun.

In 516 B.C. Darius, king of Persia, determined to build himself a lasting monument. Instead of transporting stone to the place of his choice and building a pyramid, as the Egyptian Pharaohs did, he himself went to the stone and used the rocks in their original setting. He chose the rocks of Behistun, which tower seventeen hundred feet in the air, and, on the bare, smooth surface of this rock, his scribes chiseled the record of his victories. To make sure that the message would escape the ravages of time and the hand of man, he ordered it carved in a well-nigh unapproachable place several hundred feet above the ground. Then, in order that it might be intelligible to people of all the great nations, it was written in three languages; and, for the passers-by who could not read any language, the story was shown in life-sized picture form.

The relief, occupying the upper right-hand slab, shows Darius, accompanied by two of his attendants, giving thanks to the god Ahuramazda for his victories. His left foot is

planted on the prostrate form of Gaumata, the usurper to the throne. In front of the king are nine rebel leaders, roped together, their hands tied behind their backs. Below the sculptured panel, which measures ten feet by eighteen, are the five columns of Persian text that tell the story of the king's vengeance. To the left of the Persian is a panel, just as large, bearing the Susian (Median) columns, and on the overhanging rock is the Babylonian version.

The story of Rawlinson's daring and courage in obtaining a copy of the Behistun carvings and of his scholarly ingenuity in interpreting the inscription is hardly surpassed by any contemporary tale of adventure. Carved on the face of a rock one hundred and fifty feet from the ground, it was a challenge to the twenty-five-year-old officer, and he made up his mind to get near enough to copy it. Scaling the cliff and suspending himself in front of the carving long enough to copy accurately a strange message in three languages was a feat that only an experienced Alpine climber can appreciate. In view of the modern difficulties encountered in climbing and copying the inscriptions, especially in the case of the Babylonian columns, which were inscribed on an overhanging boulder above the face of the Persian text, one is completely at a loss to conceive the dexterity and skill of those ancient workers who carved there so superbly for their king.

The story from this point resembles that of Champollion and the Rosetta Stone. In 1846 Rawlinson published his translation of the Persian column, which was a decree of King Darius. With his knowledge of the Persian cuneiform, he was able to find the corresponding characters in the Babylonian column. Eleven years after he had first climbed the great cliff, he mastered the entire inscription and forthwith published his translation of the Babylonian cuneiform to-

gether with a systematic treatment of the grammar of the language.

Rawlinson's deciphering showed that the ancient Babylonian language belonged to the Semitic family and was closely related to Hebrew, the language of the Israelites. Thus the second door was unlocked, through which Babylonia's palaces and tombs have yielded us the secrets of kings hitherto unknown.

3. *A Babylonian Odyssey*

No sooner had Rawlinson provided the key to Mesopotamia, than British, French, and German agents entered the beckoning land of the two rivers, and, from that time until the present, discoveries in Babylonia and Assyria have been revealing the great wonders of the past and illuminating the facts of biblical history.

In spite of the sensational and tremendously important discoveries of the present day, an archaeologist might well wish that he had lived in the mid-nineteenth century, before the long-buried civilization of Babylon had emerged from its grave and when the ruins of Nineveh, Ur, and a dozen ancient capitals lay waiting for the magic spade of the excavator. Botta, a French explorer, from 1843 to 1846 had excavated at Nineveh and had found many cuneiform tablets that he could not decipher. Layard was the other great name connected with early Assyrian archaeology. At the middle of the century he excavated palaces at Nineveh and Nimrud (the biblical Calah).¹

¹ For the work of Botta, Layard, Rich, Place, Oppert, and Sarzec see George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1916-37); C. W. Ceram, *Gods, Graves and Scholars* (New York, 1951); Jack Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past* (Princeton, 1946).

The discovery that precipitated the archaeological rush to Mesopotamia was the finding of the Babylonian account of the Deluge. In 1854 Hormuzd Rassam, continuing the excavation of Nineveh under Rawlinson's direction, uncovered a great palace. It was the royal residence of Ashurbanipal, who ruled Assyria from 668 to 626 B.C. Ashurbanipal is known today primarily for his great library, which embraced all forms of Babylonian literature, comprising religion, history, mathematics, laws, magic, and astronomy. (The volumes were clay tablets inscribed while in a soft condition with cuneiform or wedge-shaped characters and then baked until hard.²) Many of these works were copies of documents dating from many hundreds of years earlier. When Ashurbanipal died, his empire died with him, and all his treasures were buried in the destructive wake of Babylonian armies. British excavators have recovered over 20,000 tablets, which are now to be seen in the British Museum.

In 1872 George Smith, who had been deciphering some of these tablets, announced that one contained a Babylonian story of the Flood, closely resembling the biblical account (Gen. 7, 8). This particular tablet seems to have been the eleventh in a series of twelve composing the Nimrod Epic. The whole narrative dealing with the fortunes of a great hero named Gilgamesh is a kind of Babylonian Odyssey. The Flood tablet itself is from the seventh century B.C. and is of unusual interest to students of the Bible because of its resemblances to the Genesis account.

Ut-Napishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the Flood — how the gods decided to destroy mankind with a deluge. Ea, the god of the earth, warned Ut-Napishtim to escape by con-

² For a well-illustrated volume on cuneiform tablets see Edward Chiera, *They Wrote on Clay* (Chicago, 1938).

structing a great ship. So he did and "pitched it within and without with pitch," supplied it with food and drink, and brought into it all kinds of living creatures and finally his family. Then came the storm, which raged for seven days. At the end of the seventh day the hero looked out and saw land. The ark grounded on Mount Nizir, and then after seven more days Ut-Napishtim sent forth a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The first two returned, but the raven found a resting place. Then the animals were disembarked and the hero offered a sacrifice on the mountain top.

The parallels with the Old Testament are evident in the following excerpts from the Gilgamesh Epic:

Shurippak — a city which thou knowest,
[And] which on Euphrates' [banks] is situate —
That city was ancient, [as were] the gods within it,
When their heart led the great gods to produce the flood. . . .

The warning

Man of Shurippak, son of Ubar-Tutu,
Tear down [this] house, build a ship!
Give up possessions, seek thou life.
Forswear [worldly] goods and keep the soul alive!
Aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things.
The ship that thou shalt build,
Her dimensions shall be to measure.
Equal shall be her width and her length.
Like the Apsu thou shalt ceil her. . . .

He builds the ship

On the fifth day I laid her framework.
One [whole] acre was her floor space,
Ten dozen cubits each edge of the square deck.
I laid out the contours [and] joined her together.
I provided her with six decks,
Dividing her [thus] into seven parts.

Her floor plan I divided into nine parts.
I hammered water-plugs into her.
I saw to the punting-poles and laid in supplies.
Six "sar" [measures] of bitumen I poured into the furnace,
Three sar of asphalt [I also] poured inside. . . .

The storm

With the first glow of dawn,
A black cloud rose up from the horizon.
Inside it Adad thunders. . . .
The gods were frightened by the deluge,
And, shrinking back, they ascended to the heaven of Anu.
The gods cowered like dogs
 Crouched against the outer wall.
Ishtar cried out like a woman in travail. . . .
Six days and [six] nights
Blows the flood wind, as the south-storm sweeps the land.
When the seventh day arrived,
 The flood[-carrying] south-storm subsided in the battle,
Which it had fought like an army.
The sea grew quiet, the tempest was still, the flood ceased.
I looked at the weather: stillness had set in,
And all of mankind had returned to clay.
The landscape was as level as a flat roof.
I opened a hatch, and light fell upon my face.
Bowing low, I sat and wept,
Tears running down on my face.
I looked about for coast lines in the expanse of the sea:
In each of fourteen [regions]
 There emerged a region[-mountain].
On Mount Nisir the ship came to a halt.
Mount Nisir held the ship fast,
 Allowing no motion.
One day, a second day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast,
 Allowing no motion.
A third day, a fourth day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast,
 Allowing no motion.

A fifth, and a sixth [day], Mount Nisir held the ship fast,
Allowing no motion.

When the seventh day arrived,
I sent forth and set free a dove.
The dove went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Then I sent forth and set free a swallow.
The swallow went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Then I sent forth and set free a raven.
The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished,
He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.
Then I let out [all] to the four winds
And offered a sacrifice.
I poured out a libation on the top of the mountain.
Seven and seven cult-vessels I set up,
Upon their pot-stands I heaped cane, cedarwood, and myrtle.
The gods smelled the savor,
The gods smelled the sweet savor,
The gods crowded like flies about the sacrificer. . . .³

The similarities are so striking that most scholars agree that either the Hebrew account is dependent on the Babylonian or that both are versions of an earlier original. In both versions the hero is informed by divine revelation that the Deluge is to occur. Both are alike in the description of the building of the ark, the embarkation, the cessation of the rain, the resting of the ship on the mountain peak, the sending of the three birds, the disembarkation, and the sacrifice. As in other Hebrew-Babylonian comparisons, the Babylonian account reveals a more polytheistic and less ethical atmosphere than the Hebrew, although it would be erroneous to claim

³ James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1955).

either an ethical point of view or monotheism in any Hebrew document before the sixth century B.C.

Several other Babylonian flood accounts were found, one of which, the Nippur tablet, dates from 2000 B.C. All of them reflect the same original tradition. Aside from the obviously greater antiquity of the Nippur tablets, the fact that those found in the library of Ashurbanipal were copies of Babylonian documents belonging to pre-Hebrew times would argue the priority of the Chaldean sources and the probable dependence of the Genesis material on them. The historical connections between the Hebrews and the Babylonians also render the dependence theory more likely.

Coming from the same period are two well-known Creation accounts. These tablets describe a great conflict between Tiamat, the representation of the original chaos, and Marduk, who became the champion of the gods and the supreme deity of Babylon. Marduk vanquished Tiamat, cut her body in two, and from it made the firmament and the heavens.

Primeval chaos

When on high the heaven had not been named,
Firm ground below had not been called by name,
Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter,
[And] Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all,
Their waters commingling as a single body;
No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,
When no gods whatever had been brought into being,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined —
Then it was that the gods were formed within them. . . .

Marduk slays Tiamat

He cleft her like a shellfish into two parts:
Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky,

Pulled down the bar and posted guards.
 He bade them to allow not her waters to escape.
 He crossed the heavens and surveyed the regions.
 He squared Apsu's quarter, the abode of Nudimmud,
 As the lord measured the dimensions of Apsu.
 The Great Abode, its likeness, he fixed as Esharra,
 The Great Abode, Esharra, which he made as the firmament.
 Anu, Enlil, and Ea he made occupy their places. . . .

Making the heavenly bodies

He constructed stations for the great gods,
 Fixing their astral likenesses as constellations.
 He determined the year by designating the zones:
 He set up three constellations for each of the twelve months.
 After defining the days of the year [by means] of [heavenly]
 figures,
 He founded the station of Nebiru to determine their [heavenly]
 bands,
 That none might transgress or fall short.
 Alongside it he set up the stations of Enlil and Ea.
 Having opened up the gates on both sides,
 He strengthened the locks to the left and the right.
 In her belly he established the zenith.
 The moon he caused to shine, the night [to him] entrusting.
 He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days:
 Monthly, without cease, form designs with a crown. . . .⁴

It will be seen that there is less similarity here than in the Flood story. The Genesis account may be dependent to some extent on the older Babylonian forms, but the advanced religious genius of the Hebrews produced a loftier and vastly more dignified description of what they, at least, thought was the beginning of the world.

⁴ *Ibid.*

4. *The Origin of the "Eye for an Eye Morality"*

One of the oldest sets of laws in the world is the Code of Hammurabi, inscribed by this king at least six hundred years before the time of Moses. Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. 14:1) organized the first dynasty of Babylon and became the greatest administrator in the history of Babylonia.⁵ He united the northern and southern sections of the country, unified the empire with Babylon as the capital, and extended his rule to the Mediterranean. He was a great patron of learning and assembled a vast collection of works including poetry, narratives, laws, astronomy, hymns, prayers, and rituals. He engaged in great building enterprises and encouraged art and religion.

The thing for which Hammurabi is now remembered, however, is his codification of the laws of Babylonia. The Code, consisting of 3,654 lines, was inscribed on a block of black diorite stone, eight feet in height, and was erected in the temple of Marduk in Babylon. At the top of the monument is a representation of King Hammurabi receiving the laws from the sun-god, Shamash. Under the picture are the various laws arranged in categories very much like our own statute books. During a siege in a later age, the Elamites took the pillar with them to Susa, where it was broken into three parts. In 1901 a French expedition under De Morgan, excavating at Susa, came upon this

⁵ Excavations at Mari since 1936 have yielded over 20,000 clay tablets, some of which were written to Zimri-Lim, king of Mari, by other kings. These findings have necessitated the redating of Hammurabi to the eighteenth century B.C.

important treasure, pieced it together, and set it up in the Louvre.

Old as the Code is, it presupposes a highly advanced stage of civilization. As one reads the translation of these ordinances, one is profoundly impressed by their remarkably "modern" style and phraseology. A study of the Code gives us a fairly accurate knowledge of Babylonian life in the second millennium B.C. Here we find legislation affecting the clergy, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, tradesmen, farmers, carpenters, contractors, tailors, merchants, and slaves. Here are laws treating burglary, marriage, divorce, bankruptcy, partnership, debts, inheritance, adoption, assault and battery, wages, and slavery.

Since the Hebrews probably came from Mesopotamia originally and returned there in exile, it would not be surprising to find considerable dependence of the Old Testament laws on the Hammurabi Code. Such is the fact; indeed, in the case of some fifty articles in the so-called Mosaic laws the identity is practically verbatim.

Laws arise slowly out of long-felt social needs. When the Hebrews entered Canaan they found agricultural laws in operation, some of which were Babylonian in origin. In time, having become a part of an agricultural civilization, they found it necessary to utilize the same statutes. The Babylonian law of retaliation, for example, exhibits a close analogy to that of Exodus. This and other parallels will be of interest to students of comparative religion.

Hammurabi

196,200 — If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a mem-

Exodus

21:22 — If any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life

Hammurabi

ber of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye. If a seignior has knocked out a tooth of a seignior of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth.

199,201 — If he has destroyed the eye of a seignior's slave or broken the bone of a seignior's slave, he shall pay one-half his value. If he has knocked out a commoner's tooth, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.

250,251 — If an ox, when it was walking along the street, gored a seignior to death, that case is not subject to claim. If a seignior's ox was a gorer and his city council made it known to him that it was a gorer, but he did not pad its horns [or] tie up his ox, and that ox gored to death a member of the aristocracy, he shall give one-half mina of silver.

252 — If it was a seignior's slave, he shall give one-third mina of silver.

125 — If a seignior deposited property of his for safe-keep-

Exodus

for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

21:26 — If a man smite the eye or tooth of his servant or his maid and destroy it, then shall he let him go for his eye's sake [or tooth's sake].

21:28, 29 — If an ox gore a man or woman that they die, the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox were wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to the owner, and he hath not kept him in, and he hath killed a man or woman, then shall the ox be stoned and the owner be put to death.

21:32 — If the ox gore a servant, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

22:7 — If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money

Hammurabi

ing and at the place where he made the deposit his property has disappeared along with the property of the owner of the house, either through breaking in or through scaling [the wall], the owner of the house, who was so careless that he let whatever was given to him for safekeeping get lost, shall make [it] good and make restitution to the owner of the goods, while the owner of the house shall make a thorough search for his lost property and take [it] from its thief.

14 — If a seignior has stolen the young son of a[nother] seignior, he shall be put to death.⁶

Exodus

or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, he shall pay double.

21:16 — And he that steal-eth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.⁷

In 1952 Professor Noah Kramer of the University of Pennsylvania announced the discovery of a legal code prescribed by Ur-Nammu, a Sumerian king who lived before Hammurabi. Professor Kramer found a four-by-eight-inch tablet in a Turkish museum, where it had been stored along with some four thousand other tablets in 1890. This tablet contains enough of Ur-Nammu's laws to reveal that his brand of justice was less barbaric than that of Hammurabi. Undoubtedly, other legal codes will be found antedating Ur-Nammu.

⁶ Pritchard, *op. cit.*

⁷ American Standard Version.

5. *Job's Forerunner in Babylon*

Many documents that offer interesting parallels to Hebrew Wisdom literature⁸ have been found and deciphered. Conspicuous among these is the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer, written about 2000 B.C. Tabu-utul-bel, a righteous man, suffers unjustly at the hands of the gods, and, like Job, questions the goodness of deity and defends himself against his critics. He rehearses his pious virtues and takes great pride in his observance of the acts of worship. Like the biblical hero, he is stricken with a terrible disease. In the light of the prevailing ancient conception that established a definite connection between sin and sickness or righteousness and prosperity, his suffering was incomprehensible. Surely, this was no fitting reward for such a noble life. The inscrutability of God's plans perplexed the Babylonian sufferer as well as the Hebrew Job. The cry of Tabu-utul-bel — "Who can understand the thoughts of the gods in heaven? Where may human beings learn the ways of God?" — has its counterpart in the lament of Job: "Behold I cry out, violence! but I am not heard; I cry for help but there is no justice."

Portions of the translation of the Babylonian poem follow:

I advanced in life, I attained to the allotted span;
Wherever I turned there was evil, evil —
Oppression is increased, uprightness I see not.
I cried unto god, but he showed not his face.
I prayed to my goddess, but she raised not her head. . . .
How deeds are reversed in the world!
I look behind, oppression encloses me
Like one who the sacrifice to god did not bring,

⁸ See pp. 54-55.

And at meal-time did not invoke the goddess,
Did not bow down his face, his offering was not seen;
Like one in whose mouth prayers and supplications were locked,
For whom god's day had ceased, a feast day became rare. . . .
Who takes in vain the mighty name of his god; he says, I am like
him.

But I myself thought of prayers and supplications;
Prayer was my wisdom, sacrifice, my dignity;
The day of honoring the gods was the joy of my heart. . . .
Who can understand the thoughts of the gods in heaven?
The counsel of god is full of destruction; who can understand?
Where may human beings learn the ways of god?
He who lives at evening is dead in the morning;
Quickly he is troubled; all at once he is oppressed;
At one moment he sings and plays;
In the twinkling of an eye he howls like a funeral-mourner. . . .
Into my prison my house is turned.
Into the bonds of my flesh are my hands thrown;
Into the fetters of myself my feet have stumbled.
With a whip he has beaten me; there is no protection;
With a staff he has transfixed me; the stench was terrible! . . .
Through torture my joints are torn asunder;
My limbs are destroyed, loathing covers me. . . .
My sickness baffled the conjurers,
And the seer left dark my omens. . . .

Then follows a section which tells of a messenger from the god Marduk, who drives away the afflictions of Tabu-utul-bel. The appearance of the god in the storm and the violent demonstration accompanying the relief of the Babylonian sufferer find a counterpart in the book of Job, where Jehovah is revealed in the powers of nature.

He sent a storm wind to the horizon;
To the breast of the earth it bore a blast,
Into the depth of his ocean the disembodied spirit vanished;

Unnumbered spirits he sent back to the underworld. . . .
The roots of the disease he tore out like a plant.
The horrible slumber that settled on my rest
Like smoke filled the sky. . . .
The unrelieved headache which had overwhelmed the heavens
He took away and sent down on me the evening dew.
My eyelids, which he had veiled with the veil of night;
He blew upon with a rushing wind and made clear their sight. . . .⁹

While the Babylonian story is similar to that of Job in its development, the outcome differs considerably; for, whereas Job's suffering results in the end in his purified life, there is in the case of Tabu-utul-bel no moral improvement. Tabu-utul-bel simply gains relief from his physical distress through the spell of a sorcerer who drives away the evil spirits. The book of Job breathes a different atmosphere. Here the sufferer finds in his affliction the avenue to spiritual discernment. From the fires of adversity Job emerges to gain a new vision of God and his own soul.

6. *Ur of the Chaldees*

Until a few years ago Ur was associated only with the name of Abraham, but now we know that this Sumerian capital was over two thousand years old when the patriarch began his long trek to Canaan. For our increased knowledge of the antiquity of Ur and the Sumerian civilization we have to thank C. Leonard Woolley, the director of the joint expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, whose excavations at Ur date from 1927. For one thing, the work on this expedition points to the priority of

⁹ Translation by George A. Barton: *Archaeology and the Bible*.

Mesopotamia as the oldest known culture in the world; the most recent discoveries in this region have shown a highly developed community life as early as 6000 B.C.¹⁰

The desolate plains of Ur would be sufficient to discourage the average digger — no vegetation, no water, no life. Most of the time a blinding sandstorm sweeps over the desert. The hot wind drives the fine sand with such force that it is almost impossible to breathe. It is the sand that buries cities and preserves them for archaeologists. Even Mr. Woolley was getting discouraged as he dug here and there in the mounds without striking anything. Finally, after making a new survey of the supposed site of Ur, he commenced operations on a mound that had impressed him as unusual in appearance. His workmen were not long in coming upon the sacred portion of the ancient city of Abraham. And then for the next two years the desert was rolled back; and there emerged the temple and tombs of a metropolis that thrived in the fourth millennium B.C.

Of primary importance to students of religion is the royal tomb of King Mes-kalam-dug and Queen Shub-ad, 3300 B.C., found by the Woolley expedition in 1927. Prior to this discovery, excavations in Mesopotamia had never revealed any evidence of human sacrifice. But here was a mammoth death pit containing the bodies of seventy-four victims, sacrificed in accordance with ancient Sumerian burial rites — proof enough of the early practice that became widespread in Canaan and against which the Hebrew prophets preached.

These victims were soldiers, grooms, and maidservants who had been put to death to accompany their king and queen into the next world. At one end of the tomb were nine

¹⁰ See C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (New York, 1938).

maidservants and four manservants. At the other end were nine court ladies with well-preserved headdresses and hair nets of gold. Near the entrance were six oxen harnessed to two four-wheeled wagons. In front of the oxen were two grooms; one driver was seated in the cart, while the other was on the floor nearby. The silver rings in the noses of the oxen and the collars prove they were trained to draw carts, the earliest instance, perhaps, of domesticated cattle. One of the court ladies wore an elaborate headdress of gold ribbons and gold poplar leaves strung with carnelian and lapis lazuli beads. Around her neck were a gold chain and carnelian beads. A gold pin had once fastened her cloak at the shoulder, and at her hand was a gold tumbler. All the women, in fact, were adorned in the most elaborate fashion.

In one corner were found four harps of gold, silver, copper, and mosaic. The best preserved lyre consisted of a silver and wooden top bar, uprights decorated with golden bands, and the golden head of a bearded bull, which was attached to the sound box. The sculptured bull's head is the finest of its kind found in the ancient world. It is of hammered gold with eyes of lapis lazuli and shell and with a beard of lapis lazuli. Evidently it was a representation of the moon-god, who was called "the young bull of heaven."

The objects found in another corner of the death pit proved to be of great interest and without parallel in the history of excavation. These were two rampant rams browsing on a thicket, to which they were linked by silver chains. The bodies are of wood overlaid with a fleece of shell; the manes, beards, and horns are of lapis lazuli; the heads and legs are of gold; and the bellies of silver. This representation, often seen by Mr. Woolley on shell plaques, recalls the biblical story of the ram found in the thicket by Abraham when

he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac. The jewelry lavished on the sacrificial victims and the treasures deposited with the royal pair gave the floor of the tomb the appearance of a "carpet of gold," as one of the excavators described it. In another shaft was a wooden box containing two magnificent gold daggers and the gold helmet of the king. By the side of the queen were her crown, a silver boat, her wardrobe chest, and a wealth of objects, such as gaming boards, dice, bowls of gold and silver, and drinking goblets.

The presence of so many burial victims, most of whom were women, raises some questions for the religious historian. If this is a royal tomb, where is the king? Several conjectures might be made. The Babylonian tombs, like those in Egypt, were practically all plundered soon after the burial. The body of the king, therefore, may have been removed by the ancient robbers. On the other hand, the immediate successor to the king, fearing the tomb robbers, may have buried the king himself in an inconspicuous place in order to avoid disturbance. The early Sumerians believed that, if the body were disturbed, the soul also would be disturbed. It will be recalled that the tombs of the Egyptian kings were sealed with a curse on those who should disturb the remains.

The theory has been suggested that the human victims were offered to the deity as a substitute for the king. But if the figure of the ram had any such significance as in the Abraham story of the Bible, one wonders why human sacrifice was necessary at all. According to Sir James Frazer, the early animistic Sumerians sacrificed the ruler himself and with him his harem. Babylonian literature, rich as it is, contains no hint of burial sacrifice, but there is a reference from a later liturgy that refers to the lamb as a sacrificial substitute for a human being. This might well be a source for the Abra-

hamic incident. The predominance of women in the death pit presents still another problem. Their presence would seem to be connected with the idea of fertility and the continuance of the royal line in the next world. Suffice it to say, the Canaanite practice of human sacrifice was not without its Babylonian background, and there are, moreover, several instances of immolation in the Old Testament.

The Ziggurat and the Tower of Babel

We come now to one of the most spectacular features of the Ur discoveries — the ziggurat. The Sumerians came originally from the hills, and their gods were the gods of the hills. When they migrated to the plains of Mesopotamia and found there no hills on which to worship, they proceeded to *make* hills. The ziggurat uncovered by Mr. Woolley was built by Ur-Nammu, four hundred years before Abraham. It is a high mound two hundred feet in length and one hundred and fifty feet in breadth at the base. The center is of solid mud bricks, around which is a layer of burned bricks eight feet thick, each of which is inscribed with the name of Ur-Nammu. Modern archaeologists and native workmen can now use the three excellent flights of stairs that flank the northeast face of the ziggurat, just as priests and devotees five thousand years ago ascended to the Holy of Holies that surmounted the structure.

The biblical Tower of Babel is probably a Hebrew reference to this or some other ziggurat. Here again we can trace the influence of the Sumerian and Babylonian religious practices down through Canaanite and Hebrew history. When the Hebrews settled in Canaan, they found the people worshipping at "high places" where the deity was localized. In their assimilation of the Canaanite culture, the Hebrews took

over many of these sacred hills and in some cases retained the Canaanite names. In fact, the Israelites for a long time identified the worship of Jehovah with the agricultural god, Baal. Reference to the "high places" as a center of worship occurs frequently in the Old Testament. Not until the Deuteronomic Reform of 621 B.C. was there an authorized effort to abolish the worship at the high places. The extent of the Canaanite influence is seen in I Kings 3:3, where even Solomon is said to have "sacrificed and burned incense in the high places." Recent excavations in Palestine have disclosed a number of these shrines.

7. Visible Proof of a Flood

The discovery of fish that are five thousand years old would appear to be a fish story indeed if it were not a demonstrated fact in the recent excavations in Babylonia. It was during the course of the 1929 campaign at Ur that the most astounding discovery was made. At the bottom of the death pit that had given up the bodies of a king and queen who ruled in the fourth millennium B.C., the excavators placed their picks in a clean water-laid stratum of clay, which extended through the whole area.

Mr. Woolley's men were digging in the cemetery at a depth of forty feet. They encountered layer after layer of rubbish. They came to the tombs of King Mes-kalam-dug and Queen Shub-ad and then more rubbish. The clay tablets, pottery, and implements were of the same character in each level, showing a continuous history. Suddenly the diggers found themselves in a totally different kind of soil. Seeing a layer of clean clay, they assumed that they had reached the

original river or delta level (in prehistoric time the Persian Gulf covered what is now Babylonia), but at a depth of eight feet the clay stratum suddenly terminated, and then continued the regular soil with rubbish, implements, and various objects.

The significant phase of the whole event was that the articles under the water-laid stratum were of a different character from those above. The clay deposit (dated by Woolley at 3200 B.C.) had evidently produced a distinct break in historical continuity. A shaft was sent down some distance away from the death pit and revealed the same phenomena.

The importance of all this for students of biblical literature is at once clear. The bank of clay was made by a great inundation from the Euphrates, the magnitude of which must have been unprecedented, for it would require a tremendous amount of water to leave a layer of sediment eight feet thick. This flood, which wiped out a Mesopotamian civilization, assumed great importance in the minds of the Babylonians who came afterward, and without doubt it is the same deluge that is recorded in Genesis where it is described as a world flood.

The inundation was so complete and widespread that the civilization that it obliterated never reappeared. The objects found below the flood level consisted of painted pottery, metal, flints, and implements. Above the deluge deposit arose a people whose tools, art, and mode of living were manifestly different and whose early literature contained the story of the great flood. This tradition was handed down from one generation to another, and it is not surprising that the Hebrews, who had come originally from Babylonia, included the deluge account in their sacred books. While the flood was really local rather than universal, covering a territory approximately four hundred miles long and one hundred miles wide, it de-

stroyed what to the Sumerians *was* the world — the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

Confirming the discovery at Ur came the startling news that Dr. Stephen Langdon at Kish had, at almost the same time, come upon a stratum one and one-half feet thick, consisting of fine river sand, shells, and small fish. Kish was another early capital of the Sumerians, founded as early as 5000 B.C., and, like Ur, it has yielded revolutionary discoveries. Langdon's excavations show the most complete and continuous stratification to be seen anywhere; the various levels from 100 B.C. back to 5000 B.C. are clearly distinguishable by their respective remains.

The alluvium stratum, containing fresh-water shells and small fish, clearly separates the debris above and below and runs along the entire site. Here we have another visible proof of the gigantic inundation that must have destroyed most of the Sumerian cities about 3200 B.C. Below the flood level, Langdon found the debris of a continuous civilization to a depth of fifteen feet. At the bottom of the shaft were found implements of the Neolithic age and painted ware dating from not later than 4000 B.C. Chief among the preflood pottery was a beautifully painted Sumerian head, which is the prize of the expedition.

The dependence of the Genesis flood story on an earlier Babylonian account has long been a recognized fact; but it was not until the Woolley and Langdon expeditions that the historical basis for the tradition was ascertained. Once again the soil serves as witness and joins legend with actuality.

8. *The Hurrians of Nuzu*

Before the excavations conducted by the American School of Oriental Research at Bagdad, the Iraq Museum, Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania in the twenties and thirties, little or nothing was known about the biblical Horites (Gen. 14:6). These were the Hurrians who lived in Nuzu (sometimes spelled Nuzi) near modern Kirkuk in Iraq. The Hurrians were of Armenoid stock and came into the northern part of Mesopotamia toward the end of the third millennium B.C. They settled in the Amorite country, where they became a dominant cultural group in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C.

The Nuzu tablets, written in the Babylonian cuneiform, throw light upon numerous obscure customs and events of the patriarchal period. In Genesis 15, for instance, mention is made of Eliezer, a servant, as the adopted son of Abraham and supposedly his heir. The birth of Isaac, however, prevented Eliezer from receiving the inheritance. The Nuzu tablets contain a detailed description of this custom, which provided that a man and wife without children could adopt a son, who would be expected to take care of them, in return for which he would inherit the estate, provided no son were born.

Sarah, one of Abraham's wives, was unable to have children, so she suggested that Abraham take her maid as a substitute (Gen. 16:1 ff.). The Nuzu literature shows this to be a recognized procedure of that period on the grounds that the function of marriage was exclusively for the production of children.

The discovery of Nuzu teraphim, or household idols, and also texts that contain inheritance laws has added greatly

to our understanding of the Laban-Jacob incident (Gen. 29-31). Laban, having no male heir, adopted Jacob as his son and gave him his daughters, Leah and Rachel, as wives. The law provided that if Laban should later have a son, he should share the inheritance and take possession of the teraphim; otherwise, Jacob would inherit the teraphim. A further stipulation stated that if Jacob married any other woman, his inheritance would be forfeited. It turned out that Laban later had sons. Meanwhile, Jacob left for Canaan, and Rachel stole the teraphim. The household gods now rightly belonged to Laban's sons. Laban's search for the idols was unsuccessful, for Rachel had put them in her camel's saddle. The possession of the teraphim was the crucial point in this story. The Nuzu story of Nashwi and his adopted son, Wullu, parallels the Genesis account in practically every detail.

Other Nuzu similarities are seen in Esau's sale of his birthright (Gen. 25) and in the validity of deathbed wills or blessings (Gen. 27).

Chapter Two

Egyptian Discoveries

1. Indestructible Egypt

In spite of the greater antiquity of the Babylonian civilization, the land of the Nile will always have the greater charm because of the magnitude and the mystery of its pyramids, tombs, and temples. While they reveal to us the consummate egotism of the Pharaohs, these indestructible monuments are also symbols of immortality. The idea of the future life was an ancient belief in Egypt long before the Hebrews came into existence. The Egyptian faith in the future life produced a sense of permanence that constitutes the fascination that the Nile country has had for mankind.

Many fantastic ideas have been circulated with reference to the pyramids, but the simple fact is that they were the royal tombs. In addition to their intrinsic value and the presence within of mummies, the pyramids have provided by their inscriptions a wealth of information on the early religion of Egypt and particularly on the belief in immortality. A complete pyramid consisted of four parts: the introductory or entrance temple, situated at the edge of the Nile; the covered passage or incline; the pyramid temple where the priests performed their ceremony; and, finally, the pyramid proper, consisting of a tomb chamber containing the royal mummy and a tomb chapel where the offerings of food were made.

The great pyramid of Cheops (*ca.* 2700 B.C.) was 481

feet in height, and each of the four sides measured 755 feet 8 inches, with no side varying more than an inch. This pyramid contained 2,300,000 blocks of stone. The stones, measuring three feet in height and weighing about three tons apiece, were laid so as to form four staircases rising and narrowing to a central point. The whole edifice was made smooth with an outer casing, which in the course of time disintegrated and fell away. Quality, as well as quantity, is manifest in the joints between the stones, for they do not exceed one-fiftieth of an inch and in some cases are almost imperceptible. The stones were quarried from hills situated twelve miles away on the other side of the Nile. As to how the ancient Egyptians transported and piled these stones up to a point 481 feet high, the answer is: thousands of men, years of toil, rafts, ropes, pulleys, levers, and spiral incline.

The Egyptians built for eternity, and in their building they coupled the colossal with the microscopic. The pyramids testify to royal pride and power, but they also stand as awe-inspiring symbols of a sublime faith in the survival of life in the future realm. The Sphinx has seen far-flung empires rise and fall; more than a millennium of history had enacted itself at his feet before Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Egypt's "dwellings of eternity," in splendid ruin, even now defy the ravages of time and the hand of man.

2. The Letters of Tell el-Amarna

In 1888 an Egyptian peasant woman stumbled over some clay tablets in a field at Tell el-Amarna. They were of no importance to her, so she sold them for the equivalent of an American half-dollar. They proved to be of consider-

able importance, however, to authorities on Palestinian history.

El-Amarna was the new capital of Amenhotep IV, the heretic king who instituted a monotheistic worship. Ikhнатon, as he named himself, was a religious genius but a poor politician. While he was building a new religion, his tribute states were tearing down his imperial sway. The deterioration of the empire, resulting from the king's exclusive devotion to religious reform, is described in the Tell el-Amarna letters, which were written to Ikhнатon by his viceroys in Palestine, Phoenicia, and Mesopotamia. These tablets also give us important information about Palestine before the time of Joshua.

The most interesting of the letters are those written by Ebed-Hepa, vassal king of Jerusalem, appealing for help against invaders called the Habiru. Ebed-Hepa informs Ikhнатon that the Habiru "are taking the cities of the king" in Palestine and implores him to send mercenaries before it is too late. In one of his letters he adds an interesting personal note to Ikhнатon's cuneiform scribe, whom he apparently knew intimately: "To the scribe of my lord, the king, Ebed-Hepa the servant. Bring these words plainly before my lord, the king: 'The whole land of my lord, the king, is going to ruin.'"

The Habiru swept over Palestine, burning the towns and driving the people out of the land. As in the case of the northern provinces of the Egyptian Empire, the Palestinian vassals were in league with the invaders. Ebed-Hepa was the only loyal representative of Egypt in Palestine as Rib-Addi was in Phoenicia.¹

The problem raised by this letter and five others from

¹ For translation and further discussion of these letters, see James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 483-90; James H. Breasted, *History of Egypt* (New York, 1912), pp. 387-89.

Ebed-Hepa concerns the identification of the Habiru, who were besieging Palestine at the time of the correspondence. Scholarship differs in the answer. The word "Habiru" seems to stand for Hebrews. But how could the invaders be Hebrews when the letters were written in the Eighteenth Dynasty (reign of Amenhotep IV, 1360 B.C.), for it is usually thought that the Israelites did not leave Egypt until the Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramses II, 1225 B.C.). The solution that has most in its favor would be that the Habiru constituted another Hebrew tribe, which did not go into Egypt and which invaded Palestine earlier than Joshua. If this is the case, there must have been several phases in the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews. It is pretty generally agreed that not all of the original Hebrew people went down into Egypt. At any rate, if Habiru stands for Hebrews, it seems necessary to hold that the Hebrew conquest took place in two parts.

The Tell el-Amarna letters also reveal much regarding Jerusalem three hundred years before the monarchy, the condition of Palestine during the breakup of Egyptian domination, and also the patriarchal period. Corresponding to the letters of Ebed-Hepa are those of Rib-Addi, a viceroy of Phoenicia, which contain a similar plea for help.

3. Reconstructing Jewish History in Egypt

When did the Jews begin their wanderings? It is generally thought that the Jewish Diaspora, or colonization outside of Palestine, did not take place to any great extent until the time of the Greek conquest, toward the end of the fourth century B.C. Yet some papyri found on the Egyptian island of Elephantine in 1895 indicate that a Jewish settlement existed there as early as the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, 444 B.C.

The surprising assertion is made in the Elephantine papyri that when Cambyses the Persian invaded Egypt in 525 B.C. he found a Jewish temple at Elephantine. How the Jews came to establish a colony and temple in Egypt at such an early date is somewhat mystifying, but the discovery of these important documents throws added light on the history of the Jews.

What excites our interest in the Temple Papyrus (written in 407 B.C.) is the statement that the temple had been destroyed by Waldrang, the Persian governor. The Jews, it appears, had previously written to the high priest at Jerusalem for help but had received no reply. In this letter they appealed to Bagoas, the governor of Judah, and also to the two sons of Sanballet, the governor of Samaria. Bagoas' reply, which we also have, favors the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the Jehovah-worship.

We know that the Deuteronomic Reform of 621 B.C. prohibited all temples other than the one in Jerusalem. How are we to account, therefore, for the existence of the one in Elephantine? According to one theory, the edict did not receive immediate and universal obedience, especially in distant places. The alternate view would be that the existence of the Jewish temple in Egypt calls into question the date of the Deuteronomic Reform. The former viewpoint seems to be the more reasonable one. At any rate, it is clear that the Jerusalem authorities did not favor the rebuilding of the temple, and it was not until appeal was made to the Samaritans that help came. This also seems natural, for the Samaritans, who had just revolted from Jerusalem, would not have been averse to aiding another competitor of the Jerusalem temple. The letter is therefore illuminating in regard to the Samaritan schism in its early stages.

Bagoas' reply was as follows:

Memorandum of what Bagoas and Delaiah said to me: Let this be an instruction to you in Egypt to say before Arsames about the house of offering of the God of Heaven which had been in existence in the fortress of Elephantine [5] since ancient times, before Cambyses, and was destroyed by that wretch Vidaranag in the year 14 of King Darius: to rebuild it on its site as it was before, and the meal-offering and incense to be made on [10] that altar as it used to be.²

Another Elephantine papyrus of great importance to students of Hebrew history is the Passover letter from a certain Hannaniah in Jerusalem. The writer's purpose was to instruct the members of the Jewish colony in the observance of the Passover according to the ordinances as found in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23. The problem here is: Why should the Elephantine Jews as late as 419 B.C. need any instruction regarding the Passover, if they possessed the Torah? One scholarly opinion is that the Levitical code was not introduced until the reform of Nehemiah. That would harmonize the chronology, if such were the case. Another authority holds that the Levitical law was universally known, but it was the custom for the authorities in Jerusalem to issue an annual decree or proclamation containing detailed instruction regarding the Passover.

4. Letters from an Egyptian Sage to his Son

The hieroglyphic writings of Amen-em-ope, Egypt's wise man, were found in 1888 by Sir Ernest Budge and were subsequently taken to the British Museum, where they were deciphered. Amen-em-ope lived about 1400 B.C., but this

² Translation from James B. Pritchard, *op. cit.*

papyrus comes from the reign of Darius I. The author held a position akin to that of Joseph: superintendent of cereals and regulator of wheat. "The Teaching of Amen-em-ope, son of Kanekht," as the work is entitled, was written in the form of confidential advice to his son, and constitutes a manual of moral instruction numbering thirty chapters.

In the introductory lines we are reminded of Proverbs 21 ff., and 3:1 ff.

Give thy ears, hear what is said,
Give thy heart to understand them.
To put them in thy heart is worth while,
[But] it is damaging to him who neglects them.
Let them rest in the casket of thy belly,
That they may be a *key* in thy heart.

Chapter two contains advice that finds parallels in Proverbs 14:13 and 28:27.

Guard thyself against robbing the oppressed
And against overbearing the disabled.
Stretch not forth thy hand against the approach of an old man,
Nor *steal away* the speech of the *aged*.

Resemblances to Proverbs will also be seen in the following four excerpts: ⁸

Do not carry off the landmark at the boundaries of the arable land,
Nor disturb the position of the measuring-cord;
Be not greedy after a cubit of land,
Nor encroach upon the boundaries of a widow. . . .

Better is bread, when the heart is happy,
Than riches with sorrow.

⁸ Cf. Prov. 23:10; 15:17; 11:1; 16:11; 6:9; 20:13.

Do not *lean on* the scales nor falsify the weights,
Nor damage the fractions of the measure.

Do not spend the night fearful of the morrow.
At daybreak what is the morrow like?
Man knows not what the morrow is like.
God is [always] in his success,
Whereas man is in his failure.⁴

These and other verses are so similar to Proverbs that authorities in this field see a real dependence of the Hebrew work on the Egyptian in ethical insight as well as in literary form. Both sets of writings exhibit the same motives and ideals: prudence, honesty, industry, obedience, and temperance.

5. *Two Kings: Tutankhamon and Ikhnaton*

Tutankhamon, a young Egyptian king, may have been somewhat famous, but he could not be called great. He was a reactionary, a pawn of the priests, and a caterer to popular demand. As a dead monarch he is a thousand times more famous than when alive, due to the fact that his was the only un plundered tomb ever found in Egypt, the contents of which constitute the richest and most bewildering array of funeral treasures seen in the history of excavation.

The entrance to the tomb of Tutankhamon is directly between, and only a few yards away from, the places where Theodore M. Davis had formerly dug; and thousands of unsuspecting tourists had walked above the now famous door. It was reserved for an Englishman, Howard Carter, to make,

⁴ Pritchard, *op. cit.*

after six years' search, the most sensational find in the history of archaeology and to place the name of an obscure king of Egypt on the lips of countless people who up to that time hardly knew where Egypt was.

On November 4, 1922, Mr. Carter came upon a stone step just thirteen feet from the entrance to the tomb of Ramses VI. (When Ramses cut his tomb, he was unaware of the nearby Tutankhamon.) The excavators descended sixteen steps and found a door with its seals still intact. After entering, they descended thirty feet more to find a second door and, behind it, a profusion of wealth. It is fortunate that the discovery was reserved for our day, when archaeological technique could guarantee the safe removal of the numerous fragile objects and their preservation for the future.

For our knowledge of the Osirian ritual prescribed in the Book of the Dead, the mummy of Tutankhamon and the treasures of the sepulchral chamber provide a perfect commentary. The mummy wrappings revealed the ceremonial apron, a golden bird representing the spirit of the king, and hundreds of pieces of religious jewelry and precious stones. Venison, ducks, game, fruit, and all kinds of meat were embalmed or preserved and packed in small wooden boxes. This food was prepared for the "ka," or double, of the king in the future life.

Among other objects brought to light were some small statues of Tutankhamon, known as ushabti. Their purpose was to act for the king in the lower world and to perform for him any menial work that would be required, such as farming or irrigation. Besides showing the correct process of mummification, these statues were accompanied by model boats and various agricultural implements, which increase considerably our knowledge of Egyptian life.

Tempting as it would be to catalogue the remarkable treasures of this tomb, we must pass them by and accompany Tutankhamon's soul to the judgment hall of Osiris, where his place in the story of religion will be decided. Tutankhamon was one of history's "stand pats," who returned to the fold of Amon after his father-in-law, Ikhnaton, had broken with the priests and instituted the most significant reform in the history of Egypt. This explains why Tutankhamon was given such an elaborate burial by the grateful priests of Amon, whose power and wealth were restored, and why this king is completely overshadowed by his predecessor in the annals of the really great.

Ikhnaton, born Amenhotep IV, Tutankhamon's predecessor, made perhaps the first attempt in history to establish a monotheistic religion. He was the first great heretic. Impatient with the conventional forms of the priestly cults, he abandoned the old polytheism and chose the sun disc, Aton, as the one true god. When he sought to effect a religious reform on this basis, priestly opposition was so strong that he was forced to remove his capital to Tell el-Amarna 300 miles north of Thebes. Here he changed his name from Amenhotep (Amon is gracious) to Ikhnaton (spirit of the sun disc). For a brief period he carried on a purified religion; and with it came a more lofty literature, of which the hymn in praise of Aton is the most beautiful example.

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,
O living Aton, Beginning of Life!
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.

When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like the dead;

They sleep in their chambers
Their heads are wrapped up.

.
Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon.
When thou shinest as Aton by day
Thou drivest away the darkness.
When thou sendest forth thy rays,
The Two Lands [Egypt] are in daily festivity. . . .
All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
The trees and the plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them.

.
How manifold are thy works!
They are hidden from before us,
O sole God, whose powers no other possesseth,
Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart
While thou wast alone:
Men, all cattle, large and small,
All that are upon the earth. . . .
How excellent are thy designs, O Lord of eternity.⁵

This hymn, resembling as it does Psalm 104 and others, shows a deep, religious feeling, such as was never again attained in Egypt. The heretic king died while in his thirties and was succeeded by two sons-in-law in rapid order. The second, Tutankhaton, moved the court back to Thebes, re-established the worship of the old gods, and incidentally restored the Amon suffix to his own name, which then became Tutankhamon.

⁵ Translation by James H. Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York, 1933).

Ikhnaton was a visionary, caring more for religious mysticism than for politics, and, while he caused imperial Egypt to lose its grip on foreign tribute states, he set free an ideal that was to be the making of a great people, whose leader was soon to be born among the slaves of Ramses!

Chapter Three

The Spade in Palestine

1. The Modern Conquest of Canaan

Every spadeful of Palestinian soil tells a story. It is the story of the rise and fall of successive civilizations from cave man to crusader. The technique of archaeology has woven together from broken fragments of pottery a fabric of history well coordinated and unified, confirming many of the data recorded in the Pentateuch.

The discoveries in Palestine, with the exception of the Moabite Stone and the Dead Sea Scrolls, have never been as spectacular as those in Egypt and Babylonia. No great and enduring civilization ever made its home in Palestine; that fact alone would preclude the possibility of discovering such monuments as those given up by the sands of Egypt or the palaces of the Euphrates. The Hebrew domination of Palestine was so short-lived and so precarious that no great works were even possible except during the regime of Solomon (and as a work of art or architecture his temple has perhaps been overrated).

Then when we reflect that from the twentieth century B.C. to the twentieth century A.D., Palestine has been a battleground, tramped upon by the armies of Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome, Turkey, Arabia, and England, it is not to be expected that any ancient buildings or works of art could have survived the ravages of a hun-

dred wars. And, even if the destructive hand of war had been stayed, the fact remains that the occupants of Palestine — Canaanites and Hebrews — were neither architects nor artists. Furthermore, as has frequently been pointed out, the climate and soil of the Holy Land are not conducive to the preservation of antiquities.

Being prepared, therefore, for a certain disappointment in Palestinian archaeology, we shall be able to appreciate more keenly the recent discoveries in that area.¹

2. *The Hebrews Go Canaanite*

For thousands of years, from the most remote antiquity down to the Middle Ages, all roads led through (if not to) Beisan, the Biblical Beth Shan, which lies nine miles north of Jerusalem. Being the gateway to northern Palestine, Beisan was a perpetual battlefield, as the invading armies century after century attacked the fortress. The University of Pennsylvania Museum Expedition, under the direction of Alan Rowe, has laid bare the successive occupations of the "Mound of the Fortress," as Beisan was called, so that one may view a continuous stratification of temples from 1500 B.C. to medieval times. What a bird's-eye view of history the excavator has here, gazing upon the strata of Arabic, Byzantine, Hellenistic, Persian, Babylonian, Philistine, Egyptian, and Ca-

¹ For a complete and technical coverage of Palestinian archaeology see W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and The Bible* (New York, 1932); and *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore, 1940); G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (7th ed.; New York, 1937); A. T. Olmstead, *The History of Palestine and Syria* (New York, 1931); J. Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (Princeton, 1946); H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study, A Generation of Discovery and Research* (Oxford, 1951).

naanite civilizations! On the Egyptian level are ruins of an Egyptian fortress, statues of Ramses III, and an inscription of Ramses II to the effect that he employed Semitic labor in building his city in Egypt (Ex. 1:11).

Chief among the temple discoveries at Beisan are the two mentioned in I Samuel 31:10 and I Chronicles 10:10: the "Temple of Dagon" and the "House of Ashtoreth," respectively. It was upon the wall of Beisan that the Philistines fastened the body of King Saul (I Sam. 31:10, 12). According to I Chronicles 10:10, "They put his armor in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the Temple of Dagon." David, upon hearing of the death of Saul, took Beisan from the Philistines and demolished it. The charred wood and reddened bricks found in the remains of the temple are sufficient proof of the completeness of the job.

The temples of Dagon and Ashtoreth were rich in material relating to the Canaanite religion and the Philistines. In the middle of a large hall, near the remains of a basalt column, was found part of an Egyptian stele, erected in honor of the goddess Antit, or Ashtoreth. Above the portrait of the female deity is the inscription, "Antit, queen of heaven, mistress of all the gods." This goddess, who became the Babylonian Ishtar and the Roman Venus, was the chief Canaanite deity, the worship of whom wielded not a little influence among the Hebrews in the direction of sex worship, as the biblical records and archaeological discoveries clearly show.

The temple of Dagon (Resheph) contained a large hall seventy-three feet long and twenty-six feet wide, with three aisles. Just as in the great hall of the temple of Ashtoreth, here also was found a sculpture dedicated to the temple deity. The cylinder seal shows Ramses the Great with a war helmet, shooting at two Canaanite captives; facing him is the war-god,

Dagon, holding in his hands the symbols of life and death. (Dagon is mentioned in I Sam. 5:2-7 and Judg. 16:23.)

Fortunately, we know the name of the builder of the temple of Dagon, for he was proud enough of his work to inscribe his name and portrait on the door jamb. Ramses Wesr-Khepesh, the builder, probably had been stationed by the Pharaoh over the fortress of Beisan. The titles following his name read "overseer of soldiers, commander of the bowmen of the Lord of the Two Lands, royal scribe, Great steward, Ramses Wesr-Khepesh, the son of the fanbearer at the right hand of the king, chief of the bowmen, overseer of foreign countries, Thotmes." The two temples yielded many objects used in connection with the worship of Ashtoreth, such as shrine houses, sacred boxes, lamps, bowls, vases, and kernoi, or sacred vessels consisting of rings with cups.

The fourth level was no less interesting, for it revealed a temple built by Seti I of Egypt about 1300 B.C. This temple had been partially "open air," and at the roofed end contained an altar room. Nearby were brick ovens, a great amount of flour, and jars of sesame seed, indicative of meal offerings to the deity.

Removing the Seti temple, Mr. Rowe and his force uncovered another one directly beneath, built during the reign of Amenhotep III, 1400 B.C. The cornerstone of this temple contained cylinder seals and a ring of Amenhotep III. Figures of Ashtoreth were plentiful here also. The contents of the fifth level were numerous and varied, showing Hittite, Cretan, and Syrian influences.

Not satisfied, the excavators struck deeper yet and found below the Amenhotep III level two Canaanite temples of 1500 B.C. These were not Egyptian, like the temples above, but were strictly Canaanite in origin.

The most important object in this temple was the mazzebah or sacred stone. It is a conical shaped form made of basalt and laid in a basalt foundation. In front of the stone is a libation cup into which the blood ran from the column. The mazzebah, emblematic of the deity, was a common feature of the Canaanite religion. Even today, Mr. Rowe tells us, the natives in Beisan regard with some respect a certain stone column upon which they sacrifice small animals to fulfill vows made in the tomb enclosure of a local saint, Sheikh Halabi. The Hebrews, after their invasion of Canaan, used many mazzebahs in their confused worship of Yahweh.

In the room of sacrifice was a large brick altar in which had been cut a channel for the outlet of blood. On the altar also was a hole for a peg to which the animal was fastened. The horns of the last bull to be sacrificed were lying beside the altar. The name of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated was found inscribed on an Egyptian stele in the mazzebah room — "Mekal, the god of Beisan." This discovery adds a new name to the procession of the gods. The other temple seems to have been dedicated to Ashtoreth, or to some early likeness of her.

Only by a thorough understanding of the Canaanite religion can we appreciate the preprophetic period of Israelitish history, when the Hebrews, in conquering Canaan, were in turn conquered by Canaan's gods. The idea that the religious practices of the Canaanites strongly influenced the Hebrews, producing for a time a syncretism or mixed type of worship, has ample proof in the writings of the prophets. The excavations at Beisan and other Palestinian sites have provided valuable data relating to the religious observances encountered by the Hebrews when they entered the Promised Land.

3. The Hittites Come into Their Own

In the fourteenth century B.C. King Shuppiliumash (Suppiluliumas) ruled all Asia Minor, the land of the Hittites. His name was feared in Egypt, where the widow of Tutankhamon proposed to one of his sons. The widowed queen, realizing her precarious position upon the death of her husband, wrote to the Hittite king: "My husband is dead and I have no son. They say you have many sons. If you would give me one of them, he shall be my husband." The king was suspicious, however, and the marriage that would have united the royal houses of Hatti and Egypt did not materialize.

This leap-year proposal happened to be on one of several thousand clay tablets found in the royal library of Boghaz-Keui (Boghazköy) in Asia Minor (now Turkey). The finding of this library in 1906-07 by Professor Hugo Winckler was a major archaeological discovery. The Hittites were a powerful people in 1400 B.C. but by 1200 B.C. had vanished from the earth. Not many years ago, Professor A. H. Sayce, thinking that there must be a connection between Egypt and the early unknown inhabitants of Asia Minor, started the search for the lost empire. It was the discovery of the library of Boghaz-Keui that revealed for the first time the strategic importance of the Hittites in the ancient world.

The tablets are of clay, baked after inscription; they vary in size from small letters a few inches in length to formal inscriptions two feet high. The script used was the Babylonian cuneiform, but the texts were written for the most part in eight different Hittite dialects, totally unknown to the modern world. For twenty years scholars from Germany, Eng-

land, France, and America have been translating these languages and piecing together the story of the Hittites. The documents included treaties with Egypt, Mitanni, and the Amorites, domestic treaties, royal decrees, detailed diplomatic correspondence with Egypt and Babylonia, wills, patents, inventories, military instructions, building plans, prayers, oracles, rituals, formulae, and catalogues of books, thoroughly indexed by authors' names.

From the Boghaz-Keui tablets we have been able to reconstruct some of the history of the Hittites. As far back as 2800 B.C. they revolted against Babylonian domination. At this early date the Hittites were not a united nation but independent states, chief among which were the two rival powers: Hatti, with its capital at Boghaz-Keui, and Kussara. The various states were later welded together into a great kingdom, whose domain extended from the Black and Aegean seas to Babylonia and Assyria. Under Hattusil I, Syria and Babylonia were conquered. Later, in 1469 B.C., Syria became the Alsace-Lorraine between Egypt and the Hittites, when Thotmes III attempted to expand the domain of Egypt.

The Tell el-Amarna letters are both confirmed and amplified by the Boghaz-Keui tablets, which show that the Egyptian vassals in Syria, while pleading for aid from Amenhotep IV, were at the same time making overtures to the Hittite king. The Syrian officials, probably anticipating Egypt's loss of imperial power due to Ikhnaton's all-absorbing interest in religious reform, attempted to effect an alliance with the Hittites. Although the Hittites did not enter Palestine, they did annex Mitanni, which was the northern portion of Mesopotamia.²

² For references to the Hittites in the Old Testament see Josh. 3:10; Num. 13:29; II Kings 7:6.

Further decipherment of the famous tablets enables us to follow step by step the campaigns of King Mursil III (c. 1330 B.C.), under whom the Hittite Empire reached its zenith with the subjugation of Aleppo and the kingdom of the Amorites. At this point, Egypt, now ruled by the more ambitious Ramses II, again turned her attention to Syria. The Hittite king also prepared for action, and the clash of world powers occurred at Kadesh in 1296 B.C. The battle was disastrous for both combatants and was followed later by a treaty of peace.

Here the story of the tablets ceases, and we conclude that the Hittites disappeared before the onslaught of barbarians from the north about 1200 B.C. The very existence of the Hittite Empire, covering, as it did, all of Asia Minor, was completely forgotten, with the result that much later the name was applied only to the southernmost province. This accounts for the fact that in the Old Testament the people of Syria were called Hittites. Uriah the "Hittite" therefore was not a real Hittite.

As the Boghaz-Keui tablets show, the Hittites were familiar with the cuneiform writings of the Sumerians. Their own tablets were written in what is known as the boustrophedon system, in which the first line ran from left to right, the second from right to left, and so on.

Research in Hittite monuments has been concerned chiefly with deciphering and comparative philology. Some of the inscriptions are in Babylonian cuneiform, but the language itself is Hittite, an Indo-European tongue.³ The most important name in Hittite translation is that of the Czech philologist Friedrich Hrozny (born in Poland in 1879).

³ Compare present-day Yiddish — a German vocabulary written in Hebrew characters.

After several years of painstaking work on the Boghaz-Keui texts, he published his conclusion (1917) that the language of the Hittites belonged to the Indo-European family.

In 1947 an expedition, conducted by Professor Helmut T. Bossert under the auspices of the University of Istanbul, discovered several Phoenician inscriptions at Karatepe in the southeast corner of Asia Minor. These texts begin on the body of a symbolic stone lion and continue through several group reliefs. Along with the Semitic texts were Hittite hieroglyphic signs. Thus Bossert had before him the one prerequisite for the deciphering of any unknown language — a bilingual inscription. On the basis of the Karatepe texts, he was able to decipher many important Hittite words.⁴

From a cultural standpoint there is a tendency today to exaggerate the importance of the Hittite Empire. True, it was one of the great military powers of antiquity, as seen in the battle of Kadesh. But, aside from military prowess, the Hittites did not make any cultural advance comparable with that of the Egyptians and the Babylonians. They had no unified language but used a borrowed script; they were indifferent to religion except in some local cults; they produced no great art or architecture; and they left the world no literature.

4. *The Walls of Jericho*

The walls of Jericho that Joshua faced were the two parallel inner walls, the foundations and lower parts of which

⁴ Hittite bibliography has become very extensive, especially in French and German. For a popular and up-to-date summary of research in Hittite history, archaeology, decipherment, and also bibliography, see C. W. Ceram, *The Secret of the Hittites*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1956). See also O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (London, 1952).

are now uncovered. Signs of destruction by fire — reddened bricks, cracked stones, and ashes — are much in evidence. Remains of houses that had been burned to the ground were also found. When Jericho was taken, its attackers were able to ascend the citadel over the ruins of the walls, which had fallen outward and crumbled on the hillside. Having entered the city itself, the invaders set it on fire.

The determination of the occupational levels at Jericho has been from the first a complicated problem. The excavation was begun in 1907 under the auspices of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft with Professor Ernst Sellin in charge. Remains of a prehistoric occupation were found, above which was the Canaanite city dating back to 2000 B.C. Sellin brought to light the defensive rampart of the early city on all sides except the east.

The citadel of the city was protected by a double wall of brick, the outer one being about six feet thick and the inner about twelve feet thick. It was thought that the outer rampart belonged to the later Israelite period and that the inner double wall was from an earlier period. Later, this conclusion was corrected, and the outer wall was assigned to 1800 B.C., but the belief persisted that the inner one belonged to a still earlier time. The German excavators believed that the wall around the crest of the hill had been destroyed about 1500 B.C. and had lain in ruin for six hundred years thereafter and that during the ninth century B.C. it was rebuilt by Hiel (I Kings 16:34).

The first authority to dispute this dating was P. H. Vincent. If the calculations were correct, he thought, the conquest of Jericho by Joshua (1200 B.C.) would have to be regarded as fiction, for there would then have been no walls of Jericho. Closer examination of the pottery showed that the

inner wall dated from the late Bronze Age (1200 B.C.) rather than from the earlier period.

The Jericho excavation was continued by Professor John Garstang in 1930. The stratification was practically invisible because of the presence of former dumpings, the ancient destruction of the city, and the removal of remains for rebuilding purposes; but, after examining sixty thousand pieces of pottery and cutting an undisturbed stratification, Professor Garstang was able to confirm the opinion of the German authorities in dating the outer brick wall at about 1800 B.C. The double brick wall surrounding the citadel of the city proved to belong not to the earlier but to the later period — that of Joshua, as Père Vincent had surmised. The discrepancy was due to the fact that the inner brick wall had been built on an older fortification.

The conclusions finally reached were based primarily on the classification of pottery. Whatever certainty is achieved in the dating of the walls will be due largely to Père Vincent's expert knowledge of ceramics.

5. The High Places of Gezer

The completeness of the stratification at Gezer — where R. A. S. Macalister for many years conducted the work for the Palestine Exploration Fund — is probably due to its position somewhat removed from the beaten paths and the battle-grounds of empires. Its eight strata tell the story of the city from the cave man of 3000 B.C. to the Maccabean Wars of 165 B.C. (The archaeologist, unfortunately, has to start at the end of the story and read back to the beginning.)

The cave dwellers of Gezer left some extremely crude

pottery as the only record of their primitive life. It was molded by hand and was decorated with red and white lines. Of art and handicraft they apparently knew nothing, for the walls of the caves exhibit only meaningless scratchings. Evidence of primitive religious rites was found in the sacrificial rock, where pigs were probably slain by the tribal leader and the blood flowed into the room below.

The next stratum reveals a fortified town built by the early Semites who swept through the region and annihilated the cave dwellers about 2500 B.C. The wall of this hill town was twenty-five feet high and thirteen feet thick and supported parapets and towers. Entrance was made through a gigantic gate between two brick towers.

The outstanding discovery on the first Semitic level was the great tunnel cut through solid rock. The passage, which measures 12 feet across and 23 feet high, leads down 80 steps to a cave that is 94 feet below the courtyard level and 120 feet below the present surface. In the center of the cave is a spring. This feat of engineering was probably planned by Egyptian officials to insure water for the town in time of siege. Proof of the Egyptian domination during this period was at hand: a small Egyptian temple decorated with hieroglyphs and dedicated to one of the gods of the Nile country.

Even more noteworthy from the religious standpoint was the High Place of the native religious cult, where seven stone pillars stood as testimony to the bloody and barbaric worship of the early Semites. Here the god was appeased by the spilling of blood, which was sprinkled on the stones. There is little doubt as to the identity of the sacrificial victims. Dead bodies, being unclean, would not ordinarily be found in a sanctuary, but the whole area surrounding these monoliths is a cemetery filled with the skeletal remains of

newborn infants. Sacrifice of the first-born was a common Semitic practice; a survival is seen in Genesis 22, where Abraham attempts to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to Jehovah. The law later provided for the sacrifice of a lamb (Ex. 34:20), but the custom seems to have reappeared in the time of Manasseh (II Kings 21:6; 23:10).

The stone pillars range from five to ten feet tall, and all but one were probably secured from the vicinity. One, however, had an indentation around it, indicating that it had been dragged to Gezer from Jerusalem or some other distant place. It is thought that this was the one sacred stone of the series and that the others were really not significant. This Canaanite High Place was probably used from 2000 B.C. down to the time of the Babylonian Exile.

The deity worshiped at the High Place of Gezer was Ashtoreth, the Canaanite goddess of fruitfulness, before whom devotees of the cult performed their ritual. The well-established sex-worship of the Canaanite shrines was the object of prophetic denunciation, and without doubt it was the reform preached by the eighth-century Hebrew prophets that led to the elimination of this corrupt type of worship from Hebrew life. The Ashtoreth plaques, found in great quantities on this and other sites, bear testimony to the prevalence of the Ashtoreth cult. It was inevitable that the Hebrews, in assimilating the culture of the Canaanites, should absorb also many of their religious practices.

The story of Gezer continues to unfold itself through the Philistine, Assyrian, Greek, and Maccabean levels, each occupation leaving its traces in bits of pottery and inscriptions. For the most part, the excavations at Gezer confirm the biblical data relative to the Hebrew conquest and later periods.

6. *Solomon's Stables*

The capital of the Great Plain district was Megiddo, a strongly fortified city containing the palace of the governor and the stables of Solomon. The references to Solomon's stables and chariot houses in I Kings 9:19 and II Chronicles 8:6 have been proved correct.

The stables, which are now cleared, could accommodate three hundred horses. The largest stable consisted of five sections, each with twenty-four stalls, twelve on each side of the central passage. Supporting the roof of the stables and separating the various stalls were stone pillars, through which holes were bored, showing that the horses were tied to them. Between each pair of pillars was a stone manger. The floor of the central passage had a lime-plaster pavement, and the stalls were paved with small, rough stones to keep the horses from slipping.

The excavation of Tell el-Mutesselem (the biblical Megiddo) was begun by the Deutscher-Palestina Verein in 1903 under the direction of Dr. Gottlieb Schumacher. The expedition found a stratification of seven occupational levels from the period of the Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty to the Hellenistic age.

In the lowest stratum, dating about 2000 B.C., was a tomb with skeletons, quantities of pottery, and many scarabs. In the fifth stratum from the bottom were the remains of a palace of the Hebrew period, in which was found a seal bearing the picture of a lion and the inscription "Belonging to Shema, the servant of Jeroboam," probably meaning Jeroboam II (784-744 B.C.).

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, tak-

ing over the site in 1925, cleared and examined the four strata from the tenth to the fourth century B.C. The fourth stratum from the top was the Solomonic level, where the stables were found. The palace of the governor of the city stands close by the stables.

The Megiddo of Solomon's time was fortified by a new wall. The enemy would have had to climb the steep slope of the mound and would have encountered at the top a towered wall thirteen feet thick. Entrance by the gateway was just as difficult, for, if the outer gate were forced, the attacker would be caught in a trap between the outer and inner gate and would be under fire from the towers above.

Megiddo's "Main Street" led from the city gate straight to the palace. The governor's residence was approached by a lime-paved courtyard. An observation tower on the top of the palace commanded a fine view of the great plain below. The excavation of the palace and stables corroborates the traditional impression that Megiddo was rebuilt by Solomon and was one of the most strategic headquarters of the king's realm.

7. *The House of Ahab*

The excavation of Samaria was undertaken by Harvard University from 1908-10. References to the palace of Omri (886-875 B.C.) in I Kings 16:24 and to Ahab's (872-852 B.C.) "ivory house" in I Kings 22:39 took on new meaning with the discovery on successive levels of the remains of those royal residences and that of a third monarch. It is generally supposed that the third palace belonged to Jeroboam II.

Omri built his palace after the plans of those at Babylon, with open courts surrounded by small rooms. Workmen's

marks appear here and there in the form of Hebrew letters or simple sketches of animals. Under the floors, which were of hard earth or slabs of stone, ran channels for sanitation. Adjoining Omri's palace and serving as a continuation of it was the "ivory house" of Ahab, who built a platform on a double wall that ran three hundred feet north and south, the outer wall being six feet thick. The foundation for the new palace was made by these walls and the debris, which was thrown inside them.

In the southwest corner of Ahab's court were found the royal archives and several hundred inscribed potsherds constituting some seventy ostraca or fragments of inscribed pottery. These ostraca were written in ink with a brush pen and represent the cursive form of the old Hebrew language. They contain lists of shipments of oil and wine to various localities and provide information regarding the tax system, the geography, and the administration of the Northern Kingdom. The ostraca are important also for the light they throw on the Hebrew language in the time of Elijah. These documents were written in the common script rather than in the formal biblical Hebrew that would be found in Jerusalem.

The excavation of Samaria was resumed in 1931 under the joint auspices of Harvard University, the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The Hellenistic city was found to have been completely destroyed by Hyrcanus, but remains of the Roman and Herodian city were quite plentiful. These included a first-century temple, built by Herod; a palaestra or gymnasium, on the walls of which were names and sketches; and numerous houses — all of which give a fairly good idea of the Samaria of Jesus' day.

The last level to be investigated was the Byzantine. Valuable information is expected from the future excavation of

Samaria, especially with regard to the fortifications of the Israelite city and the Byzantine period.

8. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Whereas our best New Testament manuscripts come from the fourth century A.D., the oldest Hebrew manuscripts date from the ninth century A.D.⁵ Such was the case, at least, until 1947.

In the spring of that year a goat, seeking greener pastures, climbed up on a high cliff overlooking the Dead Sea near Jericho. The Arab goatherd followed and found the animal near the mouth of a cave. Upon entering the cave he discovered some twenty ancient scrolls hidden in earthen jars. These scrolls were later taken to the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem for decipherment and were found to be Hebrew manuscripts; the most important was one of Isaiah from the second, or no later than the first, century B.C. This impressive manuscript, consisting of twenty-four feet of sheepskin ten and one half inches wide, contains the entire Hebrew text of Isaiah. (The Old Testament committee on the Revised Standard Revision of the Bible was able to use the text in connection with the revision. Fourteen changes were made on the basis of the Dead Sea manuscript, but the changes are of no great significance and the newly found manuscript only confirms the accuracy of the Masoretic text.⁶)

The original discovery in the cave included several other documents: a nonbiblical manual of discipline from an un-

⁵ See pp. 225-226.

⁶ The standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament is called the Masoretic and is from the tenth century A.D.

known sect of the first century B.C.; a Hebrew commentary on Habakkuk on leather from the second century B.C.; an apocryphal book called *Lamech*, resembling the book of *Enoch*; some fragments of *Daniel*; a manuscript of *Isaiah* chapters 40–66, from the first century B.C.; and a volume of hymns or thanksgiving psalms. In a second search of the cave in 1949, some two hundred additional fragments were recovered, the most important of which were several scrolls containing portions of the *Pentateuch*, probably from the fourth or third century B.C. The American School of Oriental Research undertook to publish the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, but it will take several years to collate these documents and to appraise their value. It can safely be said that the discovery of the text of *Isaiah* is the greatest manuscript find of the twentieth century.⁷

Some of the scholars resident in Jerusalem at the time of these discoveries were reluctant to acknowledge the authenticity of the texts and in certain instances displayed not too much interest, at least in the initial stages of the investigations. The whole business was highly unorganized at first and the *Scrolls* were passed around from one official to another like “hot” jewelry. Their genuineness was recognized, however, by Professor W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins, and subsequently the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities took steps to organize the discovery, restoration, decipherment, and editing of the materials.

⁷ The date of the *Isaiah* scroll was verified at the University of Chicago by radioactivity. This new technique, developed by radiochemist Willard F. Libby and known as the atomic calendar, measures the radioactivity of the carbon 14 present in any object. This process indicates when the carbon 14 was first created by the action of cosmic rays.

Altogether 267 caves in the Khirbet Qumran region have been explored. The presence of tens of thousands of scrolls in one area indicated that the caves contained a library of biblical, apocryphal, and other literature. Excavation revealed a stone building containing some thirty rooms and an adjacent cemetery with about a thousand graves. It is now thought that this building was a monastery of the Essene sect.⁸ The Manual of Discipline, found in 1947, seems to have belonged to this monastic order and recalls the discovery of the Zadokite Fragments in Cairo in 1896. The Zadokite texts bear a strong resemblance to the Manual of Discipline in doctrine, language, and historical references. There is a connection also between the literature of the Essenes and some of the later apocryphal books. All of this gives added significance to the apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period and its influence on early Christianity.

Two of the Dead Sea Scrolls are definitely apocalyptic in character — *The War of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness* and a *Commentary on Habakkuk*. The latter, written probably in the middle of the first century B.C., refers to a Teacher of Righteousness, a prophet or priest who claims to have a revelation from God and who has a following among the poorer classes. The followers of the Teacher, who is called the Elect of God, are referred to as members of "the New Covenant." It is interesting to note that the Zadokite Fragments also mention a Teacher of Righteousness who is the leader of the New Covenant. The Book of Enoch (first century B.C.) speaks of "the Elect One" and "the Righteous

⁸ The Essenes were a celibate monastic order of Jews existing in the two centuries preceding the Christian era. They observed strict rules regarding their daily life, fasting, ritualistic washings, sacraments, and work. Everything was held in common. In some of their tenets they resembled the Pharisees.

One." Obviously these titles are Messianic references and are similar to the allusions to Jesus in the gospels. The Dead Sea discoveries therefore establish more firmly than ever the continuity of Messianic ideas through the intertestamental period and into the New Testament itself.

Included in the intertestamental literature and also in the Qumran Manual of Discipline is a treatise on the dualistic doctrine of The Two Ways. The most prominent Christian expression of this theme is found in the Didaché or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, a manual of instruction in the early Christian church (*ca.* 125 A.D.).⁹ The Manual of Discipline also contains a description of the sacred meal of the Jewish sect. This supper was presided over by the Teacher or Messiah, who blessed the bread and wine and distributed it to his followers.

The implications of the Dead Sea documents are not too clear at the present writing, but it is not an exaggeration to conclude that they do have a definite bearing on the questions of Jesus' uniqueness as a prophet, the originality of his teachings, the origin of Christian sacraments, and the influence of intertestamental Judaism on the beginnings of Christianity. The Teacher of Righteousness of the Scrolls would seem to be a prototype of Jesus, for both spoke of the New Covenant; they preached a similar gospel; each was regarded as a Saviour or Redeemer; and each was condemned and put to death by reactionary factions.

Previously it has been thought that in the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism the early Christian church was influenced, if at all, more by the mystery religions of the Graeco-Roman world than by Judaism. But the Qumran findings seem to point to the supper of the Essenes as an ante-

⁹ See pp. 203-206.

cedent of the Christian supper. Many of the teachings of the Essenes are reflected in early Christian literature. We do not know whether Jesus was an Essene, but some scholars feel that he was at least influenced by them.

In discussing the bearing of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the person of Jesus, much depends on one's theological and ecclesiastical position. Scholars like Millar Burrows, who are closely connected with the interpretation of the documents, are fairly objective; but some theologians have shown their apprehension by quickly assuring the public that orthodox Christology will in no way suffer by reason of the findings. To those who have always assumed a certain dependence of Christianity on earlier institutions and teachings, the implications of the Dead Sea Scrolls will not be too startling. Those who regard Jesus as uniquely the Son of God and Christianity as a divine and unchanging revelation will be somewhat disturbed, but all fair-minded scholars will be compelled to make some revision of their interpretation of the New Testament.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a more complete coverage of the Dead Sea Scrolls see Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1955), and *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1958); H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1953); E. L. Sukenik (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem, 1955); A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, A Preliminary Survey*, trans. E. Margaret Rowley (New York, 1952), *The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes*, trans. R. D. Barnett (London, 1954); Edmund Wilson, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (New York, 1955); A. Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1956). See also the following articles: F. M. Cross, "The Newly Discovered Scrolls in the Hebrew University Museum in Jerusalem," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 1949, pp. 36-46; W. H. Brownlee, "The Jerusalem Habakkuk Scroll," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, Dec., 1948, pp. 8-18, and "Excerpts from the Translation of the Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, Feb., 1951, pp. 8-13; W. F. Albright, "The Chronology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, 1951, pp. 57-60; J. C. Trevor, "The Discovery of the Scrolls," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 1948, pp. 46-57.

9. *The Oldest Alphabet in the World*

It had usually been supposed that the Phoenicians were the first people to use an alphabet, but the Ras Shamra excavations of Claude F. A. Schaeffer, begun in 1929, unearthed many clay tablets written in an earlier Semitic alphabetic script of twenty-nine characters. Several hundred such tablets were found in the scribal school or library, as well as dictionaries and Sumerian, Babylonian, and Hurrian texts. These Semitic inscriptions, coming from the fifteenth century B.C., represent the earliest alphabetic system known, antedating the Phoenicians by several centuries. The language has been described as proto-Phoenician or Canaanite.

Ras Shamra was a very ancient community — then called Ugarit — in the northwestern corner of Syria, opposite the eastern end of Cyprus. The excavations have established a fairly good historical sequence from the Neolithic age to the twelfth century B.C., when Ras Shamra disappeared. References to it have been found in Egyptian and Hittite documents and in the Tell el-Amarna letters.

The Ugaritic texts, found near the ruins of the temple of Baal, deal with certain Canaanitish myths, beliefs, and religious practices that influenced the Hebrews after their occupation of Canaan. The chief deity of Canaan, as described in these tablets, was El, whose wife was Asheran, the goddess of fertility, and whose chief offspring was Baal, the god of vegetation. Many stories about these three deities appear in the Ras Shamra literature, for which the Old Testament offers interesting parallels. El (plural Elohim) is the name of the god in one of the strands making up the Pentateuch.

Reminiscent of the tradition of the Babylonian god Shammash and Hammurabi — and also that of Yahweh and Moses

— is a Ras Shamra stele showing the king of Ugarit standing before the god El, who sits majestically on a throne. The Old Testament contains a number of references to the worship of Asherah, the mother-goddess (I Kings 16:33; 18:19; II Kings 21:7). The god Baal-zebul (II Kings 1:2 ff.) is probably a reference to the Baal of the Ugaritic texts, in which he is called Zabul. El and Baal, the two chief nature gods, were often linked together in the Canaanite religion. Both names are used in the Old Testament for the god of Israel; Saul and David named their children after Baal.

The Ugaritic texts of Ras Shamra have added materially to the existing evidence of the syncretistic nature of the Hebrew religion in the pre-prophetic period. It was not until the Deuteronomic Reform following the preaching of the eighth-century prophets that the Canaanitish influences of polytheism, sex-worship, fertility rites, and Baal ritual were abolished.¹¹

¹¹ For pictures of Ras Shamra reliefs, statuettes, and tablets see G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 104–10; and James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 81, 161, 165, 168. For translation of Ugaritic texts see James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (2nd ed.; Princeton, 1955), pp. 129–55.

Part Two

The Making of the Old Testament

Chapter Four

The Nature of the Old Testament Literature

1. Hebrew Prophecy

The books of the Old Testament, as far as content is concerned, can be grouped into seven categories, the first of which is prophecy.¹ The prophetic movement of Israel represents the Hebrew religion at its best and was the determining factor in all Hebrew history. There has been no more profound impact on Western civilization coming from antiquity, except perhaps the golden age of Greece. It is no exaggeration to say that the moral reform of the Hebrew prophets, with its continuation in the career of Jesus, is the most influential movement in religious history.

As a movement, Hebrew prophecy had its primitive origin, its early stages of growth, its maturity of expression, and its decline. The origin of prophecy can be traced to an element common to all primitive religions — the belief in a supernatural being who reveals his will to certain favored men. In the earliest times the will of the gods was ascertained through divination, the casting of lots, and soothsaying. Later, oracles and wise men claimed an intermediary relationship between God and man.

The first Hebrew form of prophecy was that of the ec-

¹ Some books contain a mixture of material. For instance, the so-called books of the Law (Gen., Exod., Lev., Num., and Deut.) contain much historical narrative, and the so-called prophetic books of Samuel and Kings are chiefly history.

statics or dervishes, a type of religious-political leadership in the eleventh century B.C. These ecstasies roamed about in groups like troubadours and worked themselves into a frenzy by means of music.² They were parasitic and had no real moral or religious message. In fact, they were regarded by the great eighth-century reformers as "false prophets."

Samuel is usually regarded as the first of the pre-literary prophets (*ca.* 1030 B.C.). It was Samuel who saw the need of a united front to protect the Hebrews from the warring tribes to the east and south of Canaan; he is credited with the institution of a united monarchy under Saul. The most important pre-literary prophet was Elijah (*ca.* 850 B.C.), who established the supremacy of Yahweh over Baal and other Canaanite gods and who initiated the typical prophetic message of doom. He was followed by Elisha, whose contribution as a prophet is difficult to perceive: by forcibly establishing Yahwehism as a formalized state religion, he helped to create the precise condition that provoked the moral reform of the eighth-century prophets.

The first literary prophet was Amos (750 B.C.), the Prophet of Righteousness. (Chronologically, Amos was the first actual book of the Old Testament.) By the middle of the eighth century B.C., the Hebrew religion consisted only of ritual and sacrifice; the poor were oppressed by the idle rich; bribery, injustice, and vice were rampant. To Amos such a condition would only spell doom unless the people repented of their sins. Standing in the streets of Bethel, a sanctuary of the northern kingdom of Israel, he proclaimed Yahweh as a god of righteousness who demands righteousness on the part of his people. He condemned the sacrifices of the priests and called the people to an ethical religion.

² See I Sam. 10:5-13.

I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings,
I will not accept them,
and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.³

Amos' condemnation of ritual was continued by Hosea, the Prophet of Love. "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings."⁴ Yet, whereas Amos was a stern realist, Hosea was more sympathetic and spoke of the comprehensive and insistent love of God.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
How can I make you like Admah!
How can I treat you like Zeboiim!
My heart recoils within me,
my compassion grows warm and tender.⁵

The prophetic portrayal of God was still further enhanced by Isaiah (740-700 B.C.), the Prophet of Faith. He pictured God as a holy, transcendent being: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts."⁶ He condemned extreme ritualism as his predecessors had.

³ Amos 5:21-24.

⁴ Hos. 6:6.

⁵ Hos. 11:8.

⁶ Isa. 6:3.

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomor'rah!
What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the Lord;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of he-goats.

When you come to appear before me,
who requires of you
this trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies —
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me,
I am wearying of bearing them.
When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
defend the fatherless,
plead for the widow.⁷

The doctrine of Messianism began with Isaiah. This teaching arose from the expectation of a divine intervention. Yahweh

⁷ Isa. 1:10-17.

would deliver Israel, and, as later taught, a new era would be ushered in by a Messiah or king.⁸

One of the distinctive contributions of Isaiah to Hebrew history was his insistence on the subordination of political Israel to religious Israel. He challenged the people to have faith in God rather than in military alliances. This is the key to the survival of the Jewish community in spite of its political downfall. The religious destiny of Israel was made and was kept independent of its political welfare.

The prophet Micah (700 B.C.) served as the epitome of eighth-century prophecy in his succinct summary: "He hath showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"⁹

Jeremiah, the Prophet of Personal Religion (626-586 B.C.), by the narration of his own experiences, portrayed religion as an inner personal feeling. God, for him, was a being with whom one can commune. Religion was the personal relation of the individual to God. In his confessions he reveals his bitterness, introspection, and weaknesses.¹⁰ He complains to God of his persecution and condemns his enemies, but in the end he arrives at a more mature view of God and man.

. . . But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.¹¹

⁸ Isa. 2:4; 9:1-7; 11:1-9.

⁹ Mic. 6:8.

¹⁰ See Jer. 17:9-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18.

¹¹ Jer. 31:33, 34.

The New Covenant of the heart will replace the covenant on paper. External laws and legal ordinances are not enough; the seat of man's religion is the heart. It is the inner man that must be changed.

The theme of individual responsibility is continued in the writings of Ezekiel, the Prophet of Individualism (592-570 B.C.). Here we encounter a surprisingly modern empirical doctrine, one that assuredly ran counter to the bulk of Old Testament writings. According to Ezekiel, every man is his own priest and is individually responsible to God. Every man will be judged by his own life. There is no such thing as inherited guilt or merit. Every man controls his own destiny.

The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.¹²

This teaching, it must be cautioned, is quite fragmentary and undeveloped, for Ezekiel was more priest than prophet and his importance lies not in his moral reform so much as in his formulation of the priestly ideal (chaps. 40-48). He was not opposed to ritualism as were his predecessors. In the Babylonian Exile he held his people together through weekly meetings for religious instruction. These meetings were really the beginning of the synagogue as an idea, if not as an actual institution. He did much to establish the Sabbath as a sacred institution. He prepared the way for the return to Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of the Jewish religious community.

With Ezekiel the priestly conception of holiness takes permanent form. Sin is ritualistic defilement, and holiness is

¹² Ezek. 18:20.

separation from all forms of contamination. We see in Ezekiel, therefore, a reaction to prophetism and a swing back to ritualism, supplementing the work of the Deuteronomists.

Before that shift was made complete, there appeared one more great prophet, Deutero-Isaiah, the Prophet of Universalism (*ca.* 538 B.C.). The prophecies of this anonymous author came to be attached somehow to the Book of Isaiah (chaps. 40–66, or at least 40–55). Deutero-Isaiah celebrates the end of the Exile and refers to Cyrus as the Great Deliverer (44:28; 45:1; 48:14). He sees Israel as the “Suffering Servant” and looks to the new age of salvation when the Messiah will establish the world in peace and security. His contribution to the prophetic movement is his conception of universalism. “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God and there is no other.”¹³ Deutero-Isaiah is the climax of prophecy, a point reached again only in the later Book of Jonah, with its universalistic implications.

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi represent the decline and disappearance of the prophetic movement and lead the way to post-Exilic legalism and exclusiveness. In that emphasis they are to be seen as priestly, rather than prophetic, influences.

The impact of the Hebrew prophetic movement on the history of religion in the Western world is profound. With the exception of Ezekiel, the prophets insisted on the religious inadequacy of ritual *per se* and defined religion in terms of morality or goodness. By doing this they made religion a potential agent for social progress and established its essential rationality.

An ethical religion cannot die because it is not dependent upon the cult. The prophets, declaring the moral independ-

¹³ II Isa. 45:22.

ence of the individual and striving to free religion from nationalistic and parochial elements, gave to religion its permanent quality.

2. *Legal Literature*

It is easy to contrast legalism with prophetism in the Hebrew religion as a conflict between the conservative, ritualistic emphasis and the liberal, ethical emphasis. To a great extent this is true, but such a presentation does not do full justice to the place of the Law in the Hebrew consciousness. Prophecy was the soul and the Law was the body; one was content, the other, method. The Law, in short, became the Jews' ethics.

This way of thinking, of course, has its dangers, as may be seen in the Deuteronomic Reform. The Book of Deuteronomy (621 B.C.) was an attempt to achieve the ideal pattern for society through a system of legal precedents. Its priestly authors, mindful of the moral reform of the prophets, tried to establish a compromise between theory and practice by setting up specific rules of behavior. This resulted in a concrete formula for living the good life but at the same time produced a tendency toward legalism.

The purpose of the legal literature in general was to maintain the Mosaic tradition and the unity of the Hebrew people. The legislation of the Priestly Code (fifth century B.C.) aimed at the preservation of the sanctity of the Sabbath, circumcision, the priesthood, and the temple. The Levitical laws in this code dealt mostly with the sacrificial system, the various offerings, and the Day of Atonement.¹⁴

¹⁴ For the P Code see pp. 111-112.

Some of the civil legislation in the Pentateuch, especially Exodus, shows an obvious dependence upon earlier Babylonian law.¹⁵ This influence came by way of the Canaanites and was a product of the Hebrew-Canaanite amalgamation. The Hebrews took over not only the cultus of the Canaanites but much of their legal system, which in turn was Babylonian in origin.

Interest has always centered in the authorship of the Ten Commandments. Hebrew tradition, taking its cue from references in the Pentateuch itself, has always assigned the Decalogue to Moses.¹⁶ But there are good reasons for thinking that Moses cannot be considered the author of the Ten Commandments in their present form (Exod. 20; Deut. 5).¹⁷ Laws grow gradually out of civil, religious, and social situations and are not revealed prior to the history of a people. As conditions change and new situations arise in society, the laws are modified. The Decalogue, for instance, implies, on the whole, an agricultural setting that could only refer to the Hebrew settlement in Canaan rather than to the Mosaic period in the desert.

Another anachronism in the Decalogue, if viewed as Mosaic, is the advanced ethical tone of the legislation. The Deuteronomic Reform was based on the ethical teaching of the eighth-century prophets, and the Decalogue (Deut. 5) seems to reflect that influence. This reform was the first attempt to prohibit image-worship, another reflection of eighth-century prophecy. Prohibition of image-worship, in fact, was not heard of until the eighth century B.C. If the Second Com-

¹⁵ See pp. 32-35.

¹⁶ Note the discrepancy between I Sam. 30:21-25, where David makes a new law regarding booty, and Num. 31:25 ff., where Moses is given credit for the same law.

¹⁷ Exod. 23 and 34 are two other recensions of the Decalogue.

mandment, directed against image-worship, had existed from the time of Moses, it seems to have been totally disregarded for several centuries! Furthermore, it must be noted that the eighth-century prophets made no appeal to the Decalogue.

While it is impossible to assign the Decalogue, as it appears in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, to Moses, it is reasonable to concede that some original impetus was provided by him. We must attribute to him some primitive statement of the worship of Yahweh and the necessity of loyalty to him. Upon this basic principle the later legislation was formulated.

3. Historical Narrative

The historical writings of the Old Testament take many forms: early war songs and ballads, stories about the patriarchs, legends of the Canaanite conquest, histories of the kings, temple records, royal annals, and post-Exilic redactions. The earlier stories, especially those about the patriarchs, are not primarily history but have a didactic quality and, at times, a great literary excellence. The story of Joseph, for instance, exhibits masterful character portrayal as well as dramatic prose style (Gen. 37-50). This type of narrative reaches its best expression in the biographical history of the united monarchy, with Saul, David, and Solomon as the heroes (I and II Sam.; I Kings). For charm and realism, the analysis of Saul's character, the narrative of David's exploits, and the description of Solomon's reign are unsurpassed in biblical literature.

A more reliable and systematic type of historical writing, although less dramatic, is found in the royal annals as preserved in I Kings. These annals were a record of the various

reigns in the united commonwealth and the divided kingdom. Likewise, the temple records, kept by the priests, provided detailed information for later writers. The author of I Kings was also indebted to an unknown writer for the Elijah stories, which describe the triumph of Yahweh over Baal in Israel and Elijah's rebuke of Ahab.

For our knowledge of Hebrew history immediately after the Exile, we are indebted to Nehemiah and Ezra. With his capture of Babylon (538 B.C.), Cyrus freed all conquered peoples, including the Jews. Apparently he encouraged the return of the Jews to Judah and the rebuilding of their temple (Ezra 1:1-4). Confirmation of the Ezra passage is found in the Cyrus Cylinder: ". . . the gods, who dwelt in them, I brought them back to their places, and caused them to dwell in a habitation for all time. All their inhabitants I collected and restored them to their dwelling places."¹⁸ This edict did not result in the immediate return of all the Jews in captivity. Many had intermarried and were content to remain in the fertile land of Babylonia. Those who did return rebuilt the temple (516 B.C.) under the inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem remained for Nehemiah, the cupbearer of the Persian king Artaxerxes. In his book, Nehemiah relates that he received the permission of Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem. In spite of considerable opposition, he rebuilt the walls, which had lain in ruins. This was in 445 B.C. Twelve years later, as occupational governor of Jerusalem he effected a great social, civic, and religious reform, organized and fortified the city, and introduced many measures that fostered exclusiveness and ritualistic conformity. One of

¹⁸ R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; New York, 1926), p. 383. Cf. II Chron. 36:23.

these laws was the prohibition of intermarriage, which caused the Samaritan schism, a revolt of certain Jews who had married foreigners. These events are recorded in the autobiography of Nehemiah, a lucid, straightforward, and highly trustworthy account.

The physical foundation of Judaism constructed by Nehemiah was supplemented by a religious foundation in the proclamation of the Book of the Law by Ezra, who came to Jerusalem during the regime of Nehemiah. Ezra's work in promulgating the Torah has been assigned to 458, 444, 432, 428, and 380 B.C. The Elephantine Papyri indicate that the Law had been introduced in Jerusalem before 419 B.C.¹⁹ Regardless of the exact date (certainly by 400 B.C.), Ezra read the Law to the people, who formally adopted it, and something akin to canonization took place. The Book of Ezra also describes the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the building of the second temple.

Hebrew history was rewritten in the late post-Exilic period by a Chronicler who, by a redaction of previous annals, cast everything in the priestly mold. The two books of Chronicles were written about 300 B.C. The author took his material about David and Solomon from the books of Samuel and Kings, but, whereas the former histories were secular or political in their treatment, the Chronicler sees David as purely a religious hero and modifies all earlier history in line with the ecclesiastical point of view. This necessitated a great amount of "white-washing" in the case of David and Solomon, with the omission of all instances of defection or questionable conduct. His history is concerned only with

¹⁹ See C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (Chicago, 1907), pp. 196 ff., 333-35; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), pp. 56-58. Cf. Ezra 7:8, 14; Neh. 8-10.

Judah, which, in his mind, was the seat of the Yahweh religion.

The ulterior motive that guided the pen of the Chronicler resulted, on the whole, in an unreliable document.²⁰ He falsely assumes that the Priestly Code and the priesthood existed from the beginning of Hebrew history. We must regard the Chronicler not as a historian, but as a doctrinaire who manipulated history in the interests of his sacerdotal point of view.

4. Literature of Revolt

The exclusiveness of the Nehemiah regime called forth two protests. The first was the Book of Ruth (about 400 B.C.), a short story opposing the prohibition of intermarriage. As literature this book is a gem and holds a high place in any anthology of the short story. The setting is the time of the judges. Because of a famine in Judah, Elimelech takes his wife Naomi and his two sons to Moab. Here the father dies and the two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Later the two sons die. With improved conditions in Judah, Naomi decides to return, leaving the two daughters-in-law in Moab. Ruth insists on going back with Naomi. Arriving in Bethlehem, Ruth finds work in the barley fields of a Jew named Boaz. They are married and have a son, who is to become the grandfather of David.

The author is content to tell his story and draws no moral from it. Nevertheless, the feeling persists that his purpose was not merely to tell a story. The implication is that if the

²⁰ For contradictions and unhistorical statements of the Chronicler see J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; New York, 1933), p. 286 ff.

great king David came from a mixed marriage there can be nothing wrong with foreign marriages. The Moabites particularly were discriminated against by the Jews of the post-Exilic community. Ruth is pictured as a modest person, loyal to the best Hebrew traditions.²¹

The universalism of Deutero-Isaiah was forgotten in the isolationist regime of Nehemiah, but its echo was heard in the brilliant satire of Jonah (400–300 B.C.). The Book of Jonah is parable at its best.²² It is listed in the canon among the prophets. Chronologically it does not belong to the prophetic period, but from a didactic or moral standpoint this book is most prophetic. No more telling blow to religious exclusiveness and sectarianism was ever dealt. God's love, according to the author, does not stop with the Jews; even the Ninevites are God's children. In the light of the rabid desire of the Jews of that period to see Yahweh's extermination of surrounding nations (as proclaimed in Obadiah, Ezekiel, and Joel), this brilliant allegory stands as a voice in the wilderness proclaiming God's concern for all people.

5. *The Wisdom Literature*

As a result of the Dispersion, in which the Jews came into intimate contact with the Greeks, a new type of literature appeared in the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon, the last two being in the Apocryphal list. These books date from 300 to 200 B.C. The authors of

²¹ Some critics do not feel that this is a protest against Nehemiah's edict. Cf. R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), p. 719.

²² See the Introduction, pp. 13–14.

the Wisdom books were true individualists and were concerned with human values and the philosophy of life. Wisdom in Hebrew usage had to do with common sense, prudence, morality, and the source of happiness.

The Book of Job might well be classified as literature of revolt in that it stands opposed to the prevailing theology of practically all of the rest of the Old Testament. The doctrine of retributive justice, as seen in the Psalms, Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and many other books of the Old Testament, says that if a man is pious he will be rewarded with filled barns and a long life; conversely, if he sins he will suffer both economic and physical adversity. Orthodoxy claimed that the righteous were favored by God with material rewards and sinners were punished with calamity. The Book of Job was written as a criticism of this theology, a protest that is unique in the Old Testament. While there is no systematic conclusion to the book, by implication it declares that there is no necessary connection between suffering and sin, that because a man is afflicted it does not follow that he has sinned. By the same token, it is not to be thought that goodness is requited in a material sense. God does not reward goodness with prosperity.

Job, a righteous man, is puzzled by his suffering and is told by his friends that he is receiving his just desert. This answer does not satisfy him, and he continues to question God about the suffering of the righteous while wicked people prosper and are happy. Job's solution comes not in an answer to the riddle of suffering but in a larger view of God, man, and the universe. The world is a complex process; God works in a mysterious way, but man can find internal peace in the faith that God is with him. The inner satisfaction of one's conscience and of God's approval is the reward for righteousness,

rather than outward prosperity, health, or the approval of friends.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from different periods brought together by an editor about 300 B.C. The theology of the sages who wrote these proverbial sayings is utilitarian and, for the most part, self-centered. It never reaches the profundity of Job or the selflessness of Jesus' teachings. It emphasizes shrewdness, personal happiness, goodness for the sake of gain, and the desirability of wisdom. Most of the proverbs take the form of a couplet in which the second line reinforces the first either by repetition or by contrast. Their main theme is the high worth of wisdom: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding" (4:7); "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (4:23); "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared with it" (8:11); "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10a); "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (15:1a); "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (22:1a); "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (23:7a); "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (19:18a).

Epicurean and Stoic influences are mixed in Ecclesiastes (*ca.* 200 B.C.), which inquires into the meaning of life and comes up with a pretty pessimistic answer. In fact, after pondering the matter for some time, the author concludes that life is a senseless rat race: "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity." There is nothing new under the sun. Life has no purpose, no meaning. Increased knowledge only means increased unhappiness. In the end there is death. Man and the beast go to the same place. There is no future life. There is a God but his ways are past finding out. Everything in the universe is

predetermined and fixed, and there is nothing man can do about it. The author's advice is to accept life as it is, be temperate in all things, and be resigned to fate.²²

6. Devotional Literature

The Psalms are the heart and soul of the Jewish people. They express the feelings of the ancient Jews at their highest point of spiritual aspiration and also at their lowest ebb of hatred and vengeance. As a revelation of man's innermost yearnings, fears, hopes, gratitude, love, hate, and longing for forgiveness, the Psalter is both timeless and universal in its appeal.

These prayers and praises of Israel became the chief source of all Christian hymnology. They express the universal moods of ecstatic joy and bitter sorrow, trust and despair, rejoicing and suffering. With such catholicity of sentiment, running the gamut of the religious life, the Psalms constitute the great common denominator for all Christian faiths today. The world's devotional literature contains no greater treasures than Psalms 1, 8, 19, 23, 34, 43, 84, 90, 91, 103, and 139.

7. Apocalypticism

The conquest of Judah by Antiochus Epiphanes reached its peak of violence in 168 B.C. The temple was plundered, the city walls were destroyed, Jewish rites were prohibited, and many Jews were killed. The climax of this outrage was

²² For a discussion of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, see chapter 6.

the sacrifice of swine on an altar to Zeus that had been erected in the temple. A revolt was led by Judas Maccabeus, and in 165 Jerusalem was once again in the hands of the Jews.

The Book of Daniel (168 B.C.) was written to encourage the Jews in their resistance to the Greeks and to assure the people of final victory. The author promised a kingdom ruled over by "the Son of Man," "an everlasting kingdom which shall not pass away" (7:13, 14). The book consists of a series of visions of things to come, including the defeat of the enemy, and the reward of the righteous in the hereafter. Daniel is the most pronounced expression of apocalyptic²⁴ in the Old Testament and is about the only canonical book that can be construed as referring to the future life. Joel (fourth century B.C.) is the only other eschatological book in the Old Testament.

²⁴ *Apocalyptic* — a type of literature devoted to revelations and visions; *Eschatology* — apocalyptic thought dealing with the end of the world or the last things.

Chapter Five

Canonization of the Old Testament

1. The Lost Library

In the light of the archaeological backgrounds (Part I) that reveal considerable source material for the Hebrew Bible, we are now prepared to proceed with the study of the formation of the Old Testament itself as a definite body of Scripture. As we do so, we must hold two distinct processes in mind: (1) the normal growth of a religious literature from oral tradition to written forms; (2) the selection and recognition of certain parts of that literature as sacred and authoritative canon.

The difference between these two stages hinges on the word "canon." The word originally meant a rod or ruler (cane). As an instrument of measurement, it then came to refer to the criteria by which something qualifies or measures up to the standard. The biblical canon can be defined as the authoritative or orthodox list of books that measured up to standard as sacred Scripture. Our purpose now is to trace the process by which certain books eventually won their way to this position of canonicity.

But before doing that, we must return to the subject of sources and compilation. In addition to the early non-Hebraic traditions that were drawn upon by Old Testament writers, there is evidence also of a lost library of early Hebrew folklore. The authors of the Old Testament seem to have

been familiar with this literature and quote from it freely. In Numbers 21:14, for instance, reference is made to a book called "The Wars of Jehovah" as the source of the poem used by the author. "The Song of the Well," an early popular poem, is quoted in Numbers 21:17, 18; "The Song of Deborah" is quoted in Judges 5:1 ff.; and "The Fable of Jotham" is related in Judges 9:7 ff. Other fragments quoted are: "The Book of Jashar" (Josh. 10:13); "The Book of Nathan" (I Chron. 29:29); "The Book of Gad" (I Chron. 29:29); "The Book of Iddo" (II Chron. 9:29); "The Book of Shemaiah" (II Chron. 12:15); and "The Book of Jehu" (II Chron. 20:34).

These are some of the rivulets or small tributaries that found their way into the main stream of historical writing among the Hebrews. Except for these fragmentary quotations, this literature is completely lost. They were a part of the accumulation of ancient folklore — ballads, histories, legends, and songs about the early patriarchs and kings. Much of this tradition was orally transmitted from generation to generation, a fact that explains such confused and garbled accounts as, for example, Genesis 12 and 26, where the same story is told of Abraham and Isaac. Gradually these ballads and historical notes were gathered into written collections that became a part of the canonical books.

2. *The Compilation of the Pentateuch*

The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch (from the Greek word "pentateuchos" meaning "the fivefold book"). The later books of the Old Testament, Jewish tradition in general, early Christian teaching,

and the traditional or orthodox view of the present day all hold that Moses wrote these five books.

A careful reading, however, will reveal many post-Mosaic elements in the Pentateuch. For example:

So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Bethpeor; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day (Deut. 34:5, 6).

This statement was obviously written long after Moses' death.

Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were upon the face of the earth (Num. 12:3).

It is hardly likely that Moses could have written that!

These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites (Gen. 36:31).

Whoever wrote this passage must have lived *after* the institution of the monarchy, which was some two centuries after the time of Moses.

And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. 34:10).

This likewise rules out Mosaic authorship.

Moses is referred to in the third person in Exodus 6:26, 27 and in Numbers 33:2. Many geographical terms used in the Pentateuch imply that the author in each case lived in Palestine and after the time of Moses (Num. 32; Deut. 1:5, 4:41, 34:1; Gen. 13:18, 14:14; Josh. 14:15). The father-in-law of Moses bears two different names (Exod. 2:18, 3:1). The statement that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6, 13:7) is unintelligible unless written after the

conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews. Deuteronomy 2:12 also speaks in retrospect of the Canaanite period. The centralization of worship at Jerusalem is assumed in Exodus 15:13, 17. The agricultural setting of the Decalogue in Exodus 23 and 34 rules out the desert background of Moses.

Discrepancies are also evident in the legal portions of the Pentateuch. According to the Book of the Covenant, Yahweh may be worshiped in different places (Ex. 20:24, 25) but the Deuteronomic Code definitely prohibits the worship of Yahweh at local sanctuaries and restricts all worship to the temple at Jerusalem (Deut. 12:2-7).

These and many other passages preclude the possibility of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Those who defend Mosaic authorship do so in the face of obvious facts. Furthermore, modern scholarship questions the very existence in the nomadic period of some of the Hebrew words, as well as some of the advanced moral ideas, found in Deuteronomy.

The non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was hinted at in a fragmentary way by Rabbi ben Ezra (1092-1167), but it was not until after the Renaissance and the Reformation that individual critics began to direct their attention to the problem. Spinoza, in the seventeenth century, called attention to the internal evidence that automatically precluded the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Simon, in his *Critical History of the Old Testament* (1678), detected different styles of writing in Genesis and recognized two independent and varying accounts of the Creation lying side by side, each of which had its own peculiar style and was complete in itself. In one story the making of man is the climax of God's creation, whereas in the second account the creation of man comes first. The first account has man and woman created at the same time, while the sec-

ond has woman created from man's rib. The style of the first record is entirely different from that of the second (compare Gen. 1:1-2:4a with Gen. 2:4b-23). Simon also recognized two contradictory flood stories in Genesis 6-9. These two strands can be taken out and reconstructed separately. One gives the duration of the flood as 40 days, whereas the other speaks of 150 days. In one Noah took into the ark two of each kind of animal, but in the other account Noah took seven of each. These observations led Simon to assign the contradictory accounts to two different authors.

Jean Astruc, physician to Louis XV, was the first to note that in some sections of the Pentateuch the name employed for God is Yahweh and in other sections it is Elohim. For instance, the first account of the Creation uses the name Elohim exclusively, while the second account never mentions Elohim but uses only Yahweh. The same holds true throughout Genesis and other books of the Pentateuch. This led Astruc to conclude that "the memoir where God is called Elohim came from one hand, and the other, where God is called Yahweh, came from another."

Eichorn, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1779), carried the point still further by listing words peculiar to the Elohim and Yahweh sections and also by describing the differences in style and atmosphere between the two records. At the beginning of the nineteenth century De Wette published his conclusion that the Book of Deuteronomy is a product of the seventh century B.C. and could not possibly be Mosaic. It is, he maintained, a reflection of the eighth-century prophetic reform, a "second law."

The investigations begun by these scholars were continued through the nineteenth century. Various theories were proposed to account for the facts observed: the Fragment the-

ory, the Supplement theory, and the Documentary theory.¹ The last-named hypothesis underwent some modification and later appeared as the Graf-Wellhausen theory, which still is the most acceptable solution.

Graf and Wellhausen, two of the ablest scholars of the nineteenth century, formulated a developmental pattern to account for all the material. According to their hypothesis, sometimes called the Development or Documentary theory, the Pentateuch is a compilation of materials from different ages and from different authors and is made up of four distinct strata or strands indicated by the symbols J, E, D, and P.

Characteristics of the Four Documents

The oldest document, called J, was written about 850 B.C. Scholars called it J because it uses for God the name Jahweh (pronounced — and now commonly spelled — Yahweh). It is called the Bible of Judah, the Southern Kingdom. The author has naïve, primitive ideas and an anthropomorphic conception of God. Yahweh “walks in the garden in the cool of the day.” He puts Adam in a garden where a serpent speaks. He calls to Adam and Eve. After they have sinned, he drives them out of the garden. He closes the door of Noah’s ark. He leaves heaven and goes to earth to confuse men. He eats with Abraham, wrestles with Jacob, and almost kills Moses.

Whereas later writers resort to the supernatural to explain the action of deity, the Yahwistic writer sees God doing everything in a perfectly natural way. An east wind brought the locusts into Egypt, and a west wind drove them into the Red Sea. In the Garden of Eden story the author tries to account for the origin of sin in the world. The Tower of

¹ See *Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York, 1929), p. 136.

Babel story tells how the different languages originated. He paints a graphic picture of Abraham about to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He writes with dramatic emotional fervor, and his vocabulary throughout is picturesque.

The E document, from 750 B.C., is the Bible of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. The author uses only the name Elohim for the Divine Being, and speaks of God in a more refined and spiritualized manner. God is farther removed from man and reveals himself to man in dreams and visions or through the ministration of angels. Since God lives in heaven, he needs a medium through whom he can speak to man. The prophets spoke for God and were interpreters of God's will. Abraham and Moses were the mouthpieces of God. This spiritualized conception of God brought with it the supernatural element, so the Elohist document speaks of miracles and signs and mighty works. Moses becomes a magician with a magic wand. The Elohist writer also shows a greater moral sensitivity than was found in J, and many of the older traditions are corrected and refined.

The J and E documents differ in vocabulary and style. In the Bible of the North, "Sinai" becomes "Horeb," the "Canaanites" are called "Amorites," and "Israel" is referred to as "Jacob."²

J and E are found scattered throughout the Pentateuch, but our third document, known as D, is a separate book, complete in itself. The eighteenth year of King Josiah (621 B.C.) was a memorable one in the history of the Hebrew religion. In that year there was found a book that became the nucleus of the Old Testament canon and changed the course of Hebrew history. This was "The Book of the Law," which was

² Scholars agree that about 650 B.C. J and E were combined to form one complete book, which is designated JE.

discovered during the repairs of the temple. The scroll was taken to the king, who summoned the elders to Jerusalem and proclaimed it to be the divine book (II Kings 22). King and people pledged themselves to follow this new code as the law of the land.

This was the book of Deuteronomy, a new edition of Hebrew law. As the Law of the Lord and a divinely inspired book, Deuteronomy became the first hint of sacred Scripture. It virtually became the first official Bible of the Jews. The priestly authors of this book tried to effect a compromise between the older priestly religion and the later prophetic reform. Their aim was to embody in this document the ethical ideals of the eighth-century reformers. The logical way to do this, they felt, was to popularize the prophetic morality in the form of laws. The authors reasoned that the people needed specific regulations defining the good life. But, to a certain extent, it was a case of method killing spirit. They were sincere in their purpose to enforce a moral reform, but morals cannot be legislated. What went into the Book of Deuteronomy as prophetism came out as legalism, and, from 621 B.C. on, the Hebrew religion came to be more and more a religion of the book, a religion of laws in which the scribe took the place of the prophet. The sacrificial system henceforth prevailed. The Hebrew religion was recast in the mold of "commandments, statutes, and judgments."

But that is only one side of the picture. The second thing to note about this document is that it is the first clear expression of monotheism. The Shema (Deut. 6:4 ff.) becomes the focal point of all later Jewish worship:

Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you

this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The only valid place to worship God now is in the temple in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy effected a puritanical reform by abolishing the local sanctuaries and high places and by prohibiting sex-worship, image-worship, and all Canaanite practices. All representations of other gods were destroyed throughout the land.

In order to make this reform more binding, the promulgators of Deuteronomy created the impression that this law was from Moses, for only by ascribing their work to ancient authority could they hope to give it proper sanction. Now the Hebrews had a divinely inspired and authoritative book.

The fourth document of the Pentateuch is called P and is dated at approximately 500 B.C. It is the "Book of the Priests" and contains such narrative elements as the story of the Creation and the Deluge, stories about the patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, and the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. But its dominant theme is the rule of God and the laws of holiness. It embodies the priestly legislation formulated by Ezekiel in the Babylonian Exile and the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26).

The Priestly Code completed the ritualistic transformation of religion begun by Deuteronomy. Now religion becomes identified with ceremonial purity. Sin is a matter of defilement. Here is the systematizing of all the laws concerning sacrifice, atonement, the annual festivals, the Sabbath, cir-

cumcision, the office of the priest, and the sanctity of the temple. Moreover, the author of P is exceedingly exclusive. His nationalistic ideal is a Hebrew theocracy, and his concept of religion is purely formal.

The Priestly Code thus formalized the Jewish religion and gave it a reactionary character. Professor Robert Pfeiffer calls it "the charter of the new Jewish church," a transformation in which "regulation took the place of spontaneity, discipline stifled freedom, solemnity displaced joyousness in the festivals, and holy sacraments were substituted for the religious exercises of the laity."³

3. *The Canonization of the Torah*

Thus far we have been concerned with the first of two processes: the growth of a body of religious literature. We are now ready to observe the second process: the recognition of this literature *as sacred and authoritative scripture*.

From the day of its promulgation in 621 B.C., the Book of Deuteronomy was invested with a certain sanctity and authority as "The Book of the Law." Sections of J, E, and P were also regarded as having semicanonical authority. J and E were brought together in the seventh century. Soon afterward Deuteronomy was added to JE, and finally P was interwoven with JE by a group of redactors.

It is this combined and redacted material which becomes by the end of the fifth century B.C. the first canon of the Jews. While the canonization of the Law is somewhat clouded in obscurity, it is generally agreed that the Torah,

³ *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), pp. 256, 260.

consisting of J, E, D, and P, was formally proclaimed canon between 450 and 400 B.C. and that all references connect this proclamation with the name of Ezra the scribe. This promulgation of the Pentateuch as Scripture was coincidental with the reforms of Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem. According to Ezra 7:1-14, Ezra the scribe came from Babylonia to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458 B.C.), and in Nehemiah 8-10 we read that fourteen years later he read the law to the congregation in Jerusalem. Presumably this was about 444 B.C., but present-day authorities are inclined to doubt the trustworthiness of the chronicler at this point.

The best that can be done is to settle upon the latest possible date, which would be 400 B.C. It is fairly well established, however, that the Samaritans seceded from Judah in 432 B.C. and took with them the Pentateuch, which was considered by them and the Jews as the authoritative Bible. The Samaritans thereafter never added anything to the Torah. This, therefore, would place the first canon before 432 B.C.

The primacy and uniqueness of the Torah are attested in all post-Exilic writings of the Old Testament. The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah assume the canonicity of the Law and look upon it with great reverence. The prophet Malachi (4:4) appeals to the Law as final authority, as do Ecclesiasticus (22:23) and I Maccabees (1:57). The later Psalms define the religious life as obedience to the Law.

The editors of the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament, 250-150 B.C.) exercised much greater care in their translation of the Pentateuch than in the rest of the Old Testament. The defective and often careless translation of the Prophets and the Writings shows that in their minds the Torah was the only authoritative Scripture.

The canonical status of the Torah is clearly implied in the Prologue of Ecclesiasticus (180 B.C.):

Since many great things have been communicated to us through the Law and the Prophets, and the others who followed after them, for which we must give Israel the praise due to instruction and wisdom; and since not only must those who read become expert themselves but those who love learning must also be able to be useful to the uninitiated, both in speaking and in writing, my grandfather, Jeshua, after devoting himself for a long time to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our forefathers, and after attaining considerable proficiency in them, was led to write on his own account something in the line of instruction and wisdom, so that lovers of learning and persons who become interested in those things might make still greater progress in living accordance with the Law.

It is clear from this quotation that by this time (132 B.C.) the Prophets are also canonical.

Philo (an older contemporary of Jesus) regards the Law with extreme reverence as the divinely inspired book. The Torah was for a long time the only section of the Old Testament to be read in the services of the synagogue, while the Prophets and the Writings were never given much prominence. In fact, the word Torah seems to refer to the whole canon in some New Testament references (John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; I Cor. 14:21).

By 400 B.C. the Torah was not only a distinct canon, but the interwoven documents had been rearranged and edited in the form of the present five books of the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

4. *The Canonization of the Prophets*

The date of the canonization of the Nebiim⁴ is even less certain than that of the Torah. We can be certain, however, that by 200 B.C. the prophetic canon was a fact.

It was inevitable that the Law should be supplemented by the Prophets in the Jewish canon. While the Law never relinquished its primacy as the foundation of Israel's institutions, it was the moral and social teaching of the prophetic party that was to define Israel's greatest contribution to the world. Distrust of contemporary prophets and a growing veneration of the ancient spokesmen for God must have led to the popular desire to preserve the prophetic books in a formal way. Also, the possible reaction to extreme legalism under the influence of the Hellenistic culture (*ca.* 300 B.C.) hastened the recognition of the worth of the prophetic books.⁵

The leading reformers of the religion of Israel gave to the Western world its two important legacies: monotheism and morality. Samuel had been responsible for the institution of the monarchy. Elijah had established the supremacy of Yahweh over other gods. Amos had insisted on the religious inadequacy of ceremony in and of itself, declaring that "right" was more important than "rite." Hosea had said that mercy was more important than sacrifice and the knowledge of God than burnt offering. Isaiah had envisaged a day of universal peace when men would "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" and learn war no more. Micah had defined religion as doing justice,

⁴ The Hebrew word "nabi" means "prophet"; plural, "nebiim."

⁵ See H. E. Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament* (London, 1925), p. 118.

loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. Jeremiah had personalized religion, emphasizing the covenant of the heart. Ezekiel had individualized religion, placing freedom and responsibility in the person. Deutero-Isaiah (the Second Isaiah) had universalized religion, teaching that salvation was for all people.

The prophetic redefining of religion as ethical rather than ritualistic, as a social force rather than an ecclesiastical form, gave a rational, pragmatic, and permanent validity to propheticism as a historic movement. Like all radical reformers, these prophets were, for the most part, rejected by their contemporaries, but in time they loomed large in the minds of the people and took on a classic status. The recognition of the prophets as having scriptural authority could hardly have taken place in the period of the canonization of the Law, since that overshadowed everything else in Judaism. It is thought, therefore, that the period in which the prophets were canonized would have to be after 300 B.C. It is clear from literary evidence *after* 200 B.C. that prophetic canonicity had been established by that date.

Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach), composed in Hebrew about 180 B.C. and translated into Greek in 132 B.C., gives the Prophets equal standing with the Law as canon. The Prologue refers three times to the Prophets as a second authoritative group.⁶ The Bible with Sirach consisted of the Law and the Prophets, as was also the case with New Testament writers. The original Ecclesiasticus reviews the Pentateuch and the work of all the Prophets except Daniel, which was not written until 168 B.C. The former Prophets are called "the famous men," and the minor Prophets are des-

⁶ See p. 114. Notice the passing reference in Sirach to "the other books," which at that time were not accepted as canon.

ignated "the twelve." This shows that Sirach was in possession of the twofold Bible, confirms the fixation of the second canon at approximately 200 B.C., and establishes the fact that the canonicity of the Prophets was recognized *in toto* before any of the Kethubim (Writings).

Likewise, the Bible for New Testament writers uniformly consisted of the Law and the Prophets. Jesus uses that term as synonymous with the Scripture (Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16, 29, 31; see also Acts 13:15; 28:33). Luke 24:44 is an interesting sidelight on the Psalms as the nucleus of the as-yet-uncanonized Kethubim.

The canonical order⁷ of the Prophets is as follows:

Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings.

Latter Prophets:

Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

Minor: The Book of the Twelve — Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The reader may well inquire why Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are listed as Prophets, since they are mainly historical in character. One reason for their inclusion was the fact that they contained stories about the early prophets (or men who were supposed to be prophets) such as Samuel and Elijah. Also, in the later tradition these books were presumed to have been written by writers of the prophetic school.

⁷ Bear in mind the difference between canonical and chronological order in the books of the Old Testament. The English Bible follows a topical order that is neither chronological nor canonical. It is to be observed also that the words "major" and "minor" in connection with the Prophets refer not to greater or lesser importance but to size. The books of the minor Prophets were so short that all twelve were included in one roll.

While on the whole their content is historical, there is a certain amount of didactic material, and that would stamp them as prophetic. The Book of Joshua was probably compiled during the Exile (586–538 B.C.) and originally was joined to the Pentateuch but was later separated. Judges and the books of Samuel, compiled from earlier sources, date from the same period. The Book of Kings shows definite Deuteronomic influence and was compiled at the close of the sixth century.

Interest in the prophetic books was not stimulated until after the Restoration chiefly because they prefigured a new order, a utopia, a Messianic era of peace. This prediction coincided with the nationalistic aspirations of the post-Exilic Jewish community, and the prophets were therefore given a more reverent and enthusiastic study. In fact, the later redactions of the prophetic books show interpolations emphasizing the overthrow of other nations and the ascendancy of the Jews, clear reflections of the post-Exilic feeling.

By 300 B.C. the Prophets were no more, and collections of the books were made preparatory to their canonization.

5. *The Canonization of the Writings*

The third canon was called "the Writings" (Hebrew: *Kethubim*) because it was made up of a number of unrelated books of diverse character. These books have little or nothing in common, and their ultimate canonization may be considered an appendix to the Law and the Prophets or an arbitrary grouping of miscellaneous but well-known writings left over after the first two canons were recognized. The Writings as finally canonized consisted of three groups:

The Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job.

The Five Rolls: Canticles (Song of Solomon), Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.

The Remainder: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I and II Chronicles.

Most of these books date from the fourth and third centuries B.C. and were in circulation at the time of the second canonization. The nucleus of the third canon was the Psalms. Undoubtedly the Psalter was the first book of the Kethubim to attain canonicity. As the hymnbook of the Hebrew people, it represents an accumulation of songs extending over a long period (750–150 B.C.).⁸ Some of the Psalms were composed especially for the dedication of the second temple (ca. 520 B.C.). Originally in five books, the Psalms were brought together, edited, and arranged in their present form about 150 B.C.

The miscellaneous character of "The Writings" suggests a variety of reasons for their canonization. Although these reasons do not necessarily coincide with the modern criteria for evaluating their worth, it is appropriate at this point to indicate briefly the nature of some of the books.

The Psalms were automatically accepted by reason of their devotional and liturgical value. Proverbs gained recognition as a collection of wise sayings of an ethical type. These gems of wisdom were gathered from different sources and were finally edited in one volume. Like the Psalms, they came from different centuries, and, like the Psalms, they were attributed to one of the heroes of ancient Israel — in this case, Solomon.

⁸ Authorities are divided on the question of Davidic authorship of the Psalms. According to some scholars, he may have written some of the Psalms but probably not more than a dozen.

Job was popular as a philosophical tract or perhaps as a mere narrative. As the latter, it has a certain literary value, to be sure, but, as the former, it is one of the most profound documents in all religious literature. Its theme is the oldest and most penetrating among all the questions of mankind: the problem of evil. Why do the righteous suffer? If God is good, why does adversity exist? The answer to that question is implicit rather than direct: more important than the reason for suffering is the attitude of the individual toward suffering when it comes. There is no necessary connection between suffering and sin; the rain falls on the just and the unjust, and nature is no respecter of persons. Adversity can be used to produce a greater strength of character and a supreme trust in the ultimate dependability of God. The Book of Job is a book of optimism and comes close to defining true religion as trust in the essential goodness of the universe.

The Book of Ruth (*ca.* 400 B.C.) is to be read against the backdrop of Nehemiah's prohibition of intermarriage. Here again is an outstanding piece of literature, but its value does not lie in its literary form, charming as that is. Back of the story is the aim of the author to oppose the edict of Nehemiah forbidding marriage with foreigners.

Canticles was the most questionable inclusion in the canon and precipitated no end of debate. Obviously this book is nothing more than a collection of oriental love poems, but it enjoyed a certain prestige as coming from Solomon. The embarrassment of admitting a book with such a secular theme was overcome by parabolic interpretation or allegorization. The writer's love for his spouse was interpreted to stand for Yahweh's love for Israel, and this symbolic interpretation helped to enhance the prestige of the book.

Popularity, of course, constituted a basic criterion for such books as Daniel, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, and Lamen-

tations. Ecclesiastes obviously cannot compare with Ecclesiasticus (an extracanonical book) in ethical content, but it survived as a best seller, influenced, perhaps, by the current Hellenistic philosophy. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, containing data of national importance, had an intrinsic historical value.

A final reason for admittance into the canon was anonymous authorship, which indicated antiquity, and that was paramount. As Pfeiffer points out, "Prophetic inspiration was thought to have come to an end immediately after the time of Ezra, and therefore no book later than Ezra could be regarded as inspired. No book could become canonical if positively *known* to have been written after Ezra."⁹ The author of Ecclesiasticus (180 B.C.) was known to be Sirach, and the book was rejected; whereas Ecclesiastes was anonymous and therefore could be given proper prestige by assigning it to Solomon. The same procedure obtained in the case of Canticles and Proverbs, which would have been rejected if they had not been attributed to Solomon. Far from our modern preference for the new, the Hebrew mind regarded recent or contemporary known authorship as unfavorable. Attributing a contemporary or recently composed book to an ancient prophet or wise man (i.e., Moses, Solomon, Ezra) was common practice.

In the case of the Kethubim the process of canonization was gradual. The earliest information on this process is the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (132 B.C.) already quoted. Three times in this one paragraph the author refers to "the Law, the Prophets, and the rest of the books." The last phrase indicates that he knew of a tripartite division of the Hebrew Scripture but does not give the third group canonical standing.

The process of canonization may have received its initial

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

impetus from the Maccabean period (from 168 B.C. to the end of the century). Without doubt the religious revival of that period and the new nationalistic feeling prompted the desire to expand the scope of sacred literature.

The Septuagint has little value as evidence for the third canon, for its chief interest is the Torah. The same holds true with Philo in the first part of the first century A.D. Coming to the New Testament, we find a number of allusions to "the Law and the Prophets" as constituting the complete canon but no real evidence for the third canon. The only valuable reference is Luke 24:44, where the canonicity of the Psalms is clearly recognized:

Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

This passage clearly indicates that even as late as 80 A.D. the third canon does not exist as a complete and approved unit, but it does show that the Psalms had won their way to the status of Scripture. Ryle's theory that the New Testament evidence implies a fixed third canon is not warranted.¹⁰

While many of the books in the Kethubim had achieved canonicity before the first century of the Christian Era, it was the Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. that confirmed the third canon and ratified once and for all the other two.¹¹ After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. it was natural that the Jews

¹⁰ "The references in the New Testament to the Old Testament Scriptures lead the unprejudiced reader to suppose that the Jewish Scriptures were regarded in the middle of that century as a complete and finished collection . . . (*op. cit.*, p. 163).

¹¹ Driver, however, says: "There is reason seriously to doubt the view that the canon was finally settled at Jamnia" (*Abingdon Bible Commentary*, p. 98).

should consolidate their position, reorganize, and give definitive form to their religion. It was also logical that they should close the canon of Scripture. This they did under the leadership of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai.

Another reason for holding the Council of Jamnia was the increasing popularity of the Septuagint among the Christians. It was imperative that a stand be taken with regard to the Greek version, which included fourteen books in excess of the Palestinian Bible. The Council of Jamnia upheld the Hebrew list of twenty-four books. Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were listed each as one book, Ezra and Nehemiah were combined, and the twelve minor prophets were in one book. Breaking down these books we have a total of thirty-nine. After 90 A.D. no change was made in the Palestinian canon, which stands as follows:

The Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The Prophets:

The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings.

The Latter Prophets:

Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

Minor: The Book of the Twelve: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The Writings:

The Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job.

The Five Rolls: Canticle, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.

The Remainder: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I and II Chronicles.

Contemporaneous with the late books of the New Testament as authority for the canon is Josephus, who wrote *Against Apion* (ca. 100 A.D.). Josephus used the Septuagint rather than the tripartite division of the Jewish canon and mentioned twenty-two books in the Old Testament as a well-defined, fixed collection. His list consisted of five books of Moses, thirteen books of prophecy, and four books of hymns and moral teaching. The Hebrew list comprised twenty-four books, but Josephus, writing for Greeks, used the Septuagint or Alexandrian canon of twenty-two books, combining Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah.

Thus the tripartite canon of the Old Testament was fixed by 100 A.D., although the canonical primacy of the Torah was never relinquished.

Early Greek manuscripts differ in the order and number of books in the Alexandrian or Septuagint canon. *Codex Vaticanus* contains forty-six books as against fifty in *Codex Alexandrinus*. In other words, the Apocryphal list in the Septuagint, i.e., books in excess of the Palestinian Hebrew canon, varied greatly.¹²

¹² For the Old Testament canonical lists of Melito of Sardis (ca. 170 A.D.), Origen (250 A.D.), Athanasius (365 A.D.), Jerome (400 A.D.), and the Eastern churches, see *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1952), I, 40-42.

Chapter Six

Extracanoncal Literature of the Old Testament

1. The Apocrypha

The Septuagint or Hellenistic Bible

Following the conquest of Alexander the Great (*ca.* 332 B.C.), there was a large emigration of Jews, both forced and voluntary, from Judah to all the countries of the Mediterranean world. This scattering is known as the Diaspora. There were, of course, earlier dispersions of the Jews as in the Babylonian Exile. In that connection it is a mistake to suppose that all the Jews returned to their homeland after the Persian victory over the Babylonians. Most of them remained in Mesopotamia, where they had intermarried, had settled down to trading and farming, and, on the whole, had become content with their new surroundings. The two centers of the Diaspora, or "Greater Israel," as it might be called, were Babylon and Alexandria. Our attention is now directed to the latter city, which in 300 B.C. contained more Jews than Jerusalem.

In the wake of Alexander's conquest followed the Greek language, which became the commercial and literary tongue of the Mediterranean world. That the Diaspora Jews normally wrote and spoke Greek is evident from contemporary synagogue inscriptions, which are in Greek. It is safe to say that most of the Jews in Alexandria were ignorant of their

ancestral tongue and were therefore unable to read their own Bible. Thus in 250 B.C. during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, arrangements were made for the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek for the benefit of these Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt.

This version is called the Septuagint. According to tradition, the translation was made by seventy men (Latin *septuaginta*, meaning seventy). The work was begun about 250 B.C. and was continued for at least seventy-five years. We have already referred to the extreme care exercised in the rendering of the Torah into Greek and the comparatively careless manner in which the other books of the Old Testament were handled. This laxity in regard to books other than the Torah is seen in the selection of books to be included in the Alexandrian canon.

Hellenistic Judaism, influenced by the tolerant, liberal outlook of the Greeks, became less exclusive and narrow than Palestinian Judaism. The Alexandrian Jews especially were liberal and comprehensive in their religious views, so it is easy to understand why the Alexandrian Septuagint contained several books not acceptable to Palestinian authorities. Specifically, in addition to the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew canon, the Septuagint contained the following fourteen books:

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

THE SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS

THE BOOK OF TOBIT

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

THE REMAINDER OF ESTHER

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

ECCLESIASTICUS OR THE WISDOM OF SIRACH

THE BOOK OF BARUCH

THE BOOK OF SUSANNA

THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN

THE STORY OF BEL AND THE DRAGON

THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACCABEES

THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

The order of the books in the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew list and no attention is given to the tripartite division of the canon. First and II Kings replace the two books of Samuel, III and IV Kings stand for I and II Kings, and II Ezra takes the place of Nehemiah.

History of the Apocrypha

Our chief interest is the inclusion in the Septuagint of the fourteen books that are outside the Hebrew Old Testament. These books are known as the *Apocrypha* (a Greek word meaning "hidden" and therefore "mysterious" or "spurious"). All of the *Apocrypha* except Sirach are anonymous, and all were written by Jewish authors, although some were written in Greek. The Apocryphal writings were known by the Palestinian rabbis at Jamnia, but they were emphatically rejected largely because they either were written in Greek or were recent in composition.

We have referred to the prevalence of Greek as the language of the Mediterranean world from 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. The earliest Christians were Jews who were loyal to the Law but who were also followers of Jesus. These Jewish followers of "The Way" most probably did not know Hebrew, so they had to use the Greek Old Testament. Christianity, while born a Jewish religion, after 50 A.D. became Gentile, and the early Christians outside of the Petrine circle in Jeru-

saalem spoke and wrote Greek. It was natural, therefore, that the Scripture of the early Christian church should be the Greek Old Testament rather than the Hebrew. When Paul, for instance, quoted from the Old Testament, he used the Septuagint version and not the Hebrew.

Since the Septuagint contained the fourteen extra books, the Christians came to accept them as an integral part of the Bible and gave them at least a quasi-canonical status. As the Jewish element in Christianity receded, the leaders of Gentile Christianity ceased to distinguish between the Hebrew and the Alexandrian canons. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul (*ca.* 180 A.D.) quotes from three of the Apocryphal books as Scripture. Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* 200 A.D.), the city where the Septuagint originated, naturally assumed the canonicity of the Apocrypha, as did Tertullian (*ca.* 220 A.D.), bishop of Carthage.

The Old Latin version (*ca.* 175 A.D.) was translated from the Alexandrian Septuagint and therefore contained the Apocrypha. However, although the Septuagint became the normative Old Testament for early Christianity, as we come into the third and fourth centuries we notice a growing distrust of the Apocrypha on the part of the leaders of the church. Origen (*ca.* 250 A.D.), holding strictly to the Hebrew Old Testament, definitely excluded the Apocrypha from the canon. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (*ca.* 340 A.D.) and church historian, omits the Apocrypha in his official canonical lists but elsewhere refers to them as "disputed books." Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem (*ca.* 400 A.D.), admonishes his people to "read the twenty-two books of the Old Testament proper but have nothing to do with Apocryphal writings." Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (*ca.* 365 A.D.), takes a position that anticipates the later Protestant view (and

Jerome as well) when he states: "All the books of the Old Testament are twenty-two in number; there are also other books not included in these nor admitted into the canon, which have been framed by the fathers for the benefit of those approaching Christianity" and follows with the Apocryphal list. Rufinus in Rome (*ca.* 410) concurs, citing the present Old Testament as canonical and referring to the Apocrypha as "ecclesiastical but not canonical."

A key figure in the history of the Apocrypha is Jerome (340-420), eminent scholar and churchman. He was commissioned by Pope Damasus in 383 to revise the Old Latin version. In 390 he undertook the translation of the complete Bible into Latin, a project that consumed some fourteen years. This was called the Vulgate, which became the Bible of Western Christendom for a thousand years and today is still the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

Accepting the Septuagint as the Old Testament of the Christian church, Jerome included the Apocrypha in his translation; but he was influenced more by the Hebrew Old Testament, which he was translating, and therefore was inclined to relegate the extra books to a noncanonical position. After listing the twenty-two accepted books, he writes: "Whatever is beyond these must be reckoned as Apocrypha. Therefore these books are not in the canon. . . . The church reads them for the edification of the people." In spite of his own attitude toward the Apocrypha, Jerome felt it necessary to compromise to a certain degree and included the books in his translation. The Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) recognized the canonicity of the extra books, and the church at Rome in the fifth century, following the teaching of Augustine, included the books as Old Testament canon. Jerome's objections were forgotten, and throughout the mil-

lennium that followed no adverse comment was made except by Thomas Aquinas (thirteenth century), who was inclined to give the Apocrypha a secondary place.

In the early years of the Protestant Reformation Luther translated the Bible into German, going back to the Hebrew text for the Old Testament and to the Greek for the New Testament (1534). Not finding the extra fourteen books in the Hebrew canon, he took a definite stand against their inclusion as canonical works. He translated the Apocrypha and put them in an appendix to the Old Testament proper, commenting editorially that they were not on a par with Scripture but "were good and useful for reading," which is precisely what Jerome had said. Jerome, however, had scattered the Apocryphal books throughout the Vulgate, just as they were in the Septuagint. The Wycliffe Bible, translated into English from the Vulgate, has the same arrangement.

The English versions from Tyndale to the King James Bible printed the Apocrypha as an appendix to the Old Testament. Thus the Protestant position became firmly established (both Anglican and Lutheran) that the Apocryphal books were noncanonical but could be used for purposes of edification.

The Council of Trent (1546), acting more from an anti-Protestant feeling than from a desire to follow Jerome's views, fixed the Roman Catholic position as follows: "The Holy Ecumenical and General Council of Trent, following the example of the orthodox fathers, venerates *all* the books of the Old and New Testaments with an equal feeling of devotion." This statement is followed by a list of the biblical works, including the Apocrypha, and the announcement concludes with anathema on all who do not recognize all the books as equally inspired Scripture. But the decree was made over the

objection of Cardinals Ximines and Cajetan, both of whom held to Jerome's views. The Vatican Council of 1870 ratified the canonicity of the Apocrypha as decreed by the Council of Trent.

The reader will now recognize the difference between the present Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles and the history behind that difference. It is also apparent that the two conflicting points of view regarding the status of the Apocrypha go back to the earliest days of Christianity and are present throughout Christian history. In the present Vulgate and Douai versions of the Roman Catholic Church, the Apocrypha are an integral part of the Old Testament but are sometimes labeled "deutero-canonical," a term implying "secondary-canon." The Vulgate places some of the Apocrypha in an appendix after the New Testament (Prayer of Manasses, III and IV Esdras). The Greek church, inheriting the Septuagint, accepts the Apocrypha with variations in the order and placement of books.¹

Character of the Apocryphal Books

Just as Deuteronomy was the nucleus and most important book of the Pentateuch and as the Psalms served in the same way for the third canon, so Ecclesiasticus may well be considered the most valuable book in the Apocrypha, at least from the standpoint of ethical and religious values. It was called "Ecclesiasticus," or "Church-book," because it was

¹ *The Apocrypha: An American Translation* by E. J. Goodspeed (Chicago, 1938), is an excellent English translation in an attractive format. It was issued in connection with the publication of *The Holy Bible: An American Translation*. See also R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in English* (Oxford, 1913); C. C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature; a Brief Introduction* (New Haven, 1945); and R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times, with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1949).

used for a long time as a manual of instruction for young people entering the Christian church. It is the only book in the Apocrypha with known authorship. We gather from the text that Jesus, son of Sirach, was a sage in Jerusalem and conducted a scribal school. He published his essays in Hebrew (180 B.C.), and his grandson translated them into Greek (132 B.C.), adding a suitable preface.

Ecclesiasticus is the longest book of all the Wisdom literature of the Jews. The word "wisdom" in Hellenistic Judaism refers not to abstract philosophy but to practical ethics. The cultural and tolerant atmosphere of Ecclesiasticus reflects the Greek influence, which was felt even in the heart of Palestine in the second century B.C. As in the Book of Proverbs, the author here extols the virtues of prudence, kindness, obedience, discipline, humility, and learning, but the dominant theme is wisdom, not necessarily for its own sake but for a better understanding of the Law. The book is replete with shrewd, epigrammatic sayings about the good life and the pursuit of happiness: "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled" (13:1); "Nothing can ever be taken in exchange for a true friend" (7:1); "Judge of thy neighbor by thyself" (31:15). The hymn entitled "Now Thank We All Our God" is based on 50:22-24: "Now bless the God of all. . . ."

Two of Sirach's poems are worthy of inclusion in any canon or anthology of verse. One is a tribute to the working-man and all forms of work:

It is so with every craftsman and builder,
Who keeps at work at night as well as by day.
Some cut carved seals,
And elaborate variety of design;
Another puts his mind on painting a likeness,

And is anxious to complete his work.
It is so with the smith sitting by his anvil,
And expert in working in iron;
The smoke of the fire reduces his flesh,
And he exerts himself in the heat of the furnace.
He bends his ear to the sound of the hammer,
And his eyes are on the pattern of the implement.
He puts his mind on completing his work,
And he is anxious to finish preparing it.
It is so with the potter, as he sits at his work,
And turns the wheel with his foot;
He is constantly careful about his work,
And all his manufacture is by measure;
He will shape the clay with his arm,
And bend its strength with his feet;
He puts his mind on finishing the glazing,
And he is anxious to make his furnace clean.
All these rely on their hands;
And each one is skilful in his own work;
Without them, no city can be inhabited,
And men will not live in one or go about in it.
But they are not sought for to advise the people,
And in the public assembly they do not excel.
They do not sit on the judge's seat,
And they do not think about the decision of lawsuits;
They do not utter instruction or judgment,
And they are not found using proverbs.
Yet they support the fabric of the world,
And their prayer is in the practice of their trade.²

The book closes with a review of the deeds of the great heroes of Israel: Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Josiah. This résumé is introduced by a beautiful ode to great men, probably the most quoted lines in all the Apocrypha:

² 38:27-34.

Let us now praise distinguished men,
Our forefathers before us.
They are a great glory to the Lord who created them;
They show his majesty from of old.
Men who exercised authority in their reigns,
And were renowned for their might!
They gave their counsel with understanding,
And brought men tidings through their prophecy —
Leaders of the people in deliberation and understanding,
Men of learning for the people,
Wise in their words of instruction;
Composers of musical airs,
Authors of poems in writing;
Rich men, endowed with strength,
Who lived in peace upon their lands —
All these were honored in their generation,
And were a glory in their day.
There are some of them who have left a name,
So that men declare their praise;
And there are some who have no memorial,
And have perished as though they had not lived,
And have become as though they had not been,
With their children after them.
Yet these were merciful men,
And their uprightness has not been forgotten.
With their descendants it will remain,
A good inheritance for their posterity.
Their descendants stand by the agreements,
And their children also for their sakes;
Their posterity will endure forever,
And their glory will not be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name lives to all generations.
Peoples will recite their wisdom,
And the congregation declare their praise! ^a

Next in importance are the Maccabean books, whose value is historical rather than ethical or literary. The first book of Maccabees (90–70 B.C.) is a fairly reliable source for information on the Maccabean Revolt (175–132 B.C.). Here are described the invasion of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, the plunder of the temple and the city, the placing of the altar to Zeus in the temple, the burning of the books of the Law, and the martyrdom of the Jews. The author also describes the rebellion under the leadership of the Maccabean family, the death of Antiochus, and the liberation of the Jews under the Hasmonians. The second book of Maccabees, dealing with the same period, tells of the desecration of the temple and the martyrdom of the Jews.

The Wisdom of Solomon (50 B.C.), called “the gem of the Apocrypha,” is a philosophy of life written by an unknown author but attributed to Solomon. Again the Greek influence is seen, not only in the philosophical thought, but in the use of the classic Greek language and the stately style. At the same time, the author is attempting to establish the superiority of the Hebrew religion over the Greek culture. The intertestamental belief in immortality finds expression in a verse that has become a part of our church liturgy:

But the souls of the upright are in the hand of God,
And no torment can reach them.
In the eyes of foolish people they seemed to die,
And their decease was thought an affliction,
And their departure from us their ruin,
But they are at peace.
For though in the sight of men they are punished,
Their hope is full of immortality,⁴

⁴ 3:1–4.

The climax of the book is the author's apotheosis of wisdom:

Wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.
 For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy,
 Unique, manifold, subtle,
 Mobile, clear, undefiled,
 Distinct, beyond harm, loving the good, keen,
 Unhindered, beneficent, philanthropic,
 Firm, sure, free from care,
 All-powerful, all-seeing,
 And interpenetrating all spirits
 That are intelligent, pure, and most subtle.

.

She is the breath of the power of God,
 And a pure emanation of his almighty glory;
 Therefore nothing defiled can enter into her,
 For she is a reflection of the everlasting light,
 And a spotless mirror of the activity of God . . .⁵

The Book of Tobit (*ca.* 175 B.C.), a piece of religious fiction, is a strange and charming story of the journey of Tobias, son of Tobit, from Nineveh to Ecbatana, accompanied by the angel Raphael.⁶ In addition to being a faithful picture of Jewish piety and devotion to the Law, Tobit is especially important as showing the influence of Persian eschatology with its belief in angels and demons. New Testament apocalypticism is a continuation of Persian thought as developed in the intertestamental period.

Judith (*ca.* 150 B.C.) is another romance written to press home the paramount importance of obedience to the Law. The setting of the story is the siege of Bethulia by Holofernes, an Assyrian general. Judith, a beautiful Jewess, risked her

⁵ 7:22-26.

⁶ The famous Pollaioli painting "Raphael and Tobias" is based on this story.

life by entering the camp of the general and beheading him while he slept. She took his head back to the Jewish leaders, who promptly put to rout the army of Holofernes. This novelette has charmed many readers and was the inspiration for the great painting "Judith and Holofernes" by Tintoretto. The book may have been written, like Daniel, to encourage the revolt against the Greeks.

The Story of Susanna, the Song of the Three Children, and Bel and the Dragon are additions to the Book of Daniel in its Greek form and are therefore in the Septuagint and English Apocrypha but not in the Hebrew version. The Story of Susanna, written in the first century B.C., is undoubtedly of Pharisaic origin, having as its purpose the reform of Jewish laws regarding false witness. Two Jewish elders attempt to have relations with Susanna, the wife of a prominent Jew. She refuses and they accuse her of adultery. As she is being led to her execution, Daniel appears and demands that the accusers be examined separately. Upon examination, they contradict each other, and Susanna is acquitted. Jewish law required only two witnesses to establish the guilt of the accused. This book is a clever bit of propaganda against the practice of false witness.

The Song of the Three Children is a liturgical document depicting the delivery of Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace. Bel and the Dragon also is associated with Daniel, who is shown preaching against the false gods of Babylon.

The two books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses belong to the Ezra-Chronicles literature. The first book of Esdras contains an account of the building of the second temple, while II Esdras is a series of apocalypses similar to Daniel. The Prayer of Manasses is a penitential song resembling the Psalms.

The Remainder of Esther is simply an addition to the canonical Book of Esther for the purpose of supplying the religious motif, which was clearly lacking in the former book.

The Book of Baruch, as the title implies, purports to be from the pen of Jeremiah's biographer. It was written about 100 A.D. and is liturgical in character.

2. *The Pseudepigrapha*

Pseudepigrapha ("false writings" or "writings under assumed names") is the title applied to a collection of eighteen Jewish books outside the Septuagint canon. They are largely apocalyptic and legendary in character and come from the late intertestamental period and the first two centuries of the Christian Era. Since they were not included in the Alexandrian Bible, Jerome rejected them. Today they are called Apocrypha by the Roman Catholic Church and Pseudepigrapha by the Protestant church.⁷

Although these books are known and quoted by New Testament writers, they are decidedly inferior to the canonical works of Scripture largely because of their predominantly apocalyptic nature. Apocalypticism is a type of Jewish literature that originated in the intertestamental period and continued throughout the early centuries of the Christian Era, the most prominent examples in the canonical Scripture being Daniel and Revelation.

This type of utterance might be regarded as an extension

⁷ For an authoritative discussion of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha see R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times, with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1949), and the same author's two articles on the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1952), I, 391 ff.

of prophetic Messianism, a postponement, as it were, of the coming of the "Day of the Lord." With the failure of the Messianic era to materialize, the apocalyptic writers reasoned that there must be a future compensation or reward in a heavenly realm for all the persecution and martyrdom. Apocalypticism is a revelation of the last things, the prediction of a catastrophic ending of the world order and the ushering in of a new era, a "new heaven and a new earth." This is all in accordance with the predetermined plan of God.

Intertestamental apocalypticism shows the influence of Persian thought, particularly in the idea of the future life and the doctrine of heaven and hell. Another characteristic of this type of writing is its use of imagery and vision as a symbolic medium for its predictions.

The apocalyptists appeared comparatively late in the history of Jewish writing; so, in order to place their books within the framework of the period of inspired or revealed Scripture, they attributed their work to more ancient and well-known people such as Moses, Enoch, or Ezra.

The Book of Enoch (*ca.* 100 B.C.) is the most important of the Pseudepigrapha. Its influence is felt in several New Testament books, and it was actually considered as Scripture by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria. The idea of Sheol as an intermediate realm of probation (see Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory), or as the equivalent of hell, appears first in this book. Also used here for the first time is the Messianic title "Son of Man," a term found frequently in the New Testament. Other titles used here for the first time in a messianic sense are "the Righteous One," "the Elect One," and "Christ" or "the Anointed One."⁸

⁸ Cf. *Commentary on Habakkuk* of the Dead Sea Scrolls for same Messianic titles. See pp. 78-79.

The Book of Enoch is preserved in two Ethiopic manuscripts and is therefore sometimes called Ethiopic Enoch.

The Secrets of Enoch or Slavonic Enoch (*ca.* 50 A.D.) also influenced the New Testament writers. The idea of the millennium, appearing for the first time in this book, became typical of Christian apocalyptic.

Since the Pseudepigrapha never appeared as a well-defined collection of sacred writings, there is no standard list of books under that title, but generally the following works are recognized:

THE BOOK OF JUBILEES

THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

THE TESTAMENT OF JOB

THE LIFE OF ASENATH

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON

THE BOOK OF ENOCH

THE SECRETS OF ENOCH (SLAVONIC ENOCH)

THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSES

THE APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH

III MACCABEES

IV MACCABEES

THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH⁹

⁹ For other pseudepigraphical lists, all of which are different, see R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford, 1913); C. C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature* (New Haven, 1945); R. H. Pfeiffer, in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1952), I, 421 ff.

Part Three

The Making of the New Testament

Chapter Seven

The Nature of the New Testament Literature

1. Correspondence

Letters of Paul

There are basically four classes of literature in the New Testament: gospel (the Four Gospels), history (Acts), correspondence (Pauline and other letters), and apocalypticism (Revelation). This grouping corresponds to the order of books in the English New Testament and might also be said to represent the order of their importance, but it is not the chronological order.

It would be natural to think of the gospels as the earliest of the Christian writings, but such is not the case. Why, then, were they placed first in the New Testament? The fact is that those who gathered the books into a collection had no interest in chronological order. Our modern scientific desire to arrange things in the sequence of their historical appearance held no appeal for them. Their sole interest was in content and from that standpoint the gospels were of paramount importance.

Our introduction to the literature of the New Testament will therefore follow a somewhat different pattern.

The earliest literature in the New Testament came out of a decidedly practical situation and was not thought of as literature at all, much less as Scripture. It consisted of letters

written to various Christian communities in response to specific needs. Most of these letters were written by Paul between 52 and 64 A.D.

Paul had established the legitimacy of gentile Christianity at the Council of Jerusalem (*ca.* 48 A.D.) and subsequently had planted the gospel in the provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Whether Jewish or gentile, these new converts were confused and had many questions to ask pertaining to both belief and practice. "How are we supposed to observe the Lord's Supper?" "What are we supposed to think about the return of Jesus?" "Whom are we to follow — you or Peter or Apollos?"

Paul's letters were written to answer these and many other questions that perplexed the minds of these young Christians. That this correspondence was to become either an integral part of a new Bible called the New Testament or a body of doctrine for the edification of posterity would have been news to Paul himself. Such an idea was far from his mind. He was writing personal letters to certain people, and, if he had been able to visit them in person, he would not have written. It is inaccurate, therefore, to call them "epistles," since an epistle is a literary form or a message for *general* reading. (The books of James and Hebrews may more properly be classified as epistles because of their formal character.)

Paul's letters were "occasional"; that is, they were written for certain, specific occasions. This distinction is important because the writer of a personal letter makes only casual comment on certain events and situations that are known to his immediate readers; later readers may find these comments unintelligible. The casual nature of the intimate letter also means that trivial but immediate problems are given as much emphasis as important matters, with the result that some of the most significant teachings are often out of focus. Here

again we are confronted with the necessity of screening the transient from the permanent. First Corinthians 13 can be read with great profit by us today, but the same cannot be said for I Corinthians 7.

The importance of Paul's letters can be indicated in four ways, the first of which is their antiquity. They were written, received, read, passed about, and brought together as a distinct group before the earliest gospel was composed. In the second place, the fact that they are autobiographical — being the authentic correspondence of one of the greatest characters in Christian history after Jesus — increases their significance tremendously. They are historically valuable because they give us an insight into the life, customs, and problems of the early Christian communities. And, finally, they are permanently valuable to us because they are the record of one man's religious experience — an experience that he summed up in the phrase "in Christ."

These letters also reveal two Pauls: Paul the practical preacher of the gospel and Paul the theologian. The religion of the first is more important for us than the theology of the second, but, unfortunately, the church has often been unable to see the forest of the one for the trees of the other.

As to the dating of Paul's letters, the following chronological table represents a scholarly consensus:

I, II THESSALONIANS	50-52
GALATIANS	53
I, II CORINTHIANS	54-57
ROMANS	56-58
PHILIPPIANS	60-64
COLOSSIANS	60-64
PHILEMON	60-64
EPHESIANS (?)	60-64

These ten letters — with the exception of Ephesians — are usually accepted as Pauline, but the authenticity of the so-called Pastoral Epistles (I, II Timothy, Titus) is questioned by many authorities. Between those who accept the Pastorals as Pauline and those who emphatically reject them, there are some who recognize within these letters a nucleus of Pauline material. These fragmentary data, it is held, were later edited and amplified by a follower of Paul who was thoroughly familiar with his thought and style. Such a practice was not uncommon in ancient times.

The three letters to Timothy and Titus are called the Pastorals because they presumably carry instructions from Paul to his two pastors regarding the conduct of their parishes. But a close reading of these treatises will reveal, as Morton S. Enslin observes, that they are not letters at all, that they certainly are not from the hand of Paul, and that the author uses the names Timothy and Titus as a literary device or “stage setting.” Certain Pauline expressions are used, especially at the beginning of each letter. Much of the instruction, purportedly given by Paul to Timothy, is information that Timothy must already have had by reason of his association with the apostle.

“The whole situation is impossible,” writes Enslin, “not to say absurd and grotesque, if we assume the historic Paul writing personal letters to the historic Timothy and Titus in real situations. But if we admit that we have here the work of a later writer seeking to meet the circumstances of his own day and wishing to gain for his instruction the authority of the now long-dead Paul, the absurdity is removed.”¹

The authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline hinges on the possibility of Paul’s release from the Roman prison

¹ *Christian Beginnings* (New York, 1938), p. 300.

and a renewal of his missionary activity in new places. For this there is no evidence in the Book of Acts or in the accepted letters of Paul. In fact, the chief reason for rejecting the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals is that there is simply no place in the career of Paul where they can be placed.

But there are further reasons for rejecting these epistles as genuine. All three have a striking similarity of style, which is different from that of Paul's letters. The Pastorals refer to an ecclesiastical situation — an official hierarchy of bishops, elders, and other leaders with presumably understood functions — that did not exist in the time of Paul. Finally, the perfunctory character of the teaching stands in contrast to the typical thought of Paul.²

Paul's first letter (of those that are extant), and consequently the first book of our chronological New Testament, is I Thessalonians. The setting for this letter is Corinth between 50 and 52 A.D. On his second campaign Paul had crossed from Troas to Philippi, where he introduced Christianity to the Greeks of Macedonia, and then preached in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. At Athens he had been joined by Timothy, whom he had left in Berea with Silas. Timothy brought either a letter or an oral report from Thessalonica, and Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is an answer to this report. He praises them for their constancy but warns them against fair-weather loyalty, faintheartedness, and sexual immorality. He defends his mission against the Jewish opposition and closes with a word of encouragement for those who had lost loved ones and friends.

Apparently the letter to the Thessalonians did not suc-

² See E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament* (New York, 1936), p. 191 ff.

ceed in answering all their questions. There was some hysteria over the near approach of the Parousia.⁸ Paul wrote a second letter, assuring the Thessalonians that the "Day of the Lord" was not yet at hand.

Galatians, the most spirited of all Paul's letters, was written to his followers at Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Antioch in Pisidia. Some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem had entered among these gentile converts, claiming that Paul's gospel was illegitimate and that he discouraged his converts from observing the Law. They claimed that a gentile had to become a Jew before he could become a Christian, that it was necessary, in other words, to be circumcised.

In defending himself against these "Judaizers," who were trying to undermine his work, Paul explained that his own apostleship was "from God and not man" and then (chap. 2) described the conference at Jerusalem, which he and Barnabas attended, accompanied by Titus, an uncircumcised gentile. In the debate with Peter and James, Paul used Titus as a test case, insisting that he was a bona fide Christian, although he was not circumcised and did not follow the Law. The apostle emphasizes his independence of the Jerusalem leaders and rejoices in his victory over them in establishing the validity of gentile Christianity.

Luke's account of the Council in Acts (chap. 15) has no mention of Titus and is calmly objective as compared with this letter, which shows Paul clearly on the defensive and in a passionate, if not a belligerent, mood. His career was at stake, as was the essence of Christianity itself: was it to be merely a part of Judaism, or was it to consist of faith in Christ alone? Paul eventually triumphed, and, mainly through his

⁸ The time of the appearance or return of Christ as Messiah and the inauguration of a new era.

efforts, gentile Christianity won its independence from the domination of the Jewish Law.

When Paul reached Ephesus on his third campaign, word came to him of trouble in Corinth, due both to factions and to practical problems. Paul had evidently already written one letter (I Cor. 5:9-13), which we do not have.⁴ Now he feels compelled to write another, rebuking the Corinthians for their divisions and giving them instructions in regard to marriage, the Lord's Supper, and the belief in the Resurrection.

This letter above all others reveals intimately the problems of the early church and Paul's technique in handling them. He rebukes the Corinthians for their divisions and calls them to the unity they all have in Christ. "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. . . . For no other can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. . . . For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one spirit. . . . For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas. . . . All are yours and you are Christ's." ⁵

Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth to help settle the disputes. Upon his return to Ephesus, Paul wrote the letter now designated as II Corinthians, in which he refers to an intermediate letter, which may be found in II Corinthians 10-13. There is also evidence that Paul left Ephesus, paid a short visit to Corinth, and returned to Ephesus (II Cor. 12:14; 13:1). This is not mentioned in Acts.

⁴ II Cor. 6:14-7:1 may well be a part of this lost letter.

⁵ I Cor. 1:10 ff.

Paul's letter to the church at Rome, which he had never visited, is more in the nature of a treatise or epistle than his other letters, differing from them in its objectivity and broad theological outlook. This fact probably accounts for its position at the head of the Pauline list in our English New Testament, a position given to the letter by reason of its importance or perhaps of the importance of the church at Rome.

As a general treatise addressed to strangers, this letter naturally contains no mention of anything local or specific as with his other letters, where he knows the problems and the history of each church. It is therefore surprising to find in the closing chapter a long list of personal greetings and also reference to certain individuals who were "causing divisions" and teaching doctrines contrary to the gospel they had received (presumably from Paul). The presence of this material has prompted many critics for the past century or more to question the authenticity of chapter 16 as part of the original letter. It is not to be expected that Paul would have so many intimate friends in a city he had never visited. Some authorities have concluded that what we have here is a later recension of Romans.

The letter, written during Paul's third visit to Corinth (*ca.* 56-58 A.D.), includes a vivid description of the life in the spirit:

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. . . . If Christ is in you, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. . . . All who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. . . . We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. . . . In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present,

nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.⁶

Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome (60-64 A.D.). While Rome is not mentioned specifically, it is usually thought that "the letters of the captivity" were penned there rather than at Caesarea, where he was prisoner for two years, or Ephesus, which is vaguely connected with an earlier imprisonment of Paul. The first three of these letters contain some of the noblest religious and ethical teaching in the New Testament and define once and for all the nature of the Christian life.

Philippians is the most intimate and affectionate of all of Paul's letters. He tells his friends of his condition and of his hope of release. Then he describes his experience of oneness with Christ and admonishes them to preserve their unity in Christ.

For me to live is Christ. . . . I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. . . . One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. . . . So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and having one mind.⁷

Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon are linked together by the mention of Onesimus and Archippus in Philemon and Colossians and Tychicus, the messenger, in Ephesians and

⁶ Chapter 8.

⁷ 1:21; 2:1; 3:7, 13, 14.

Colossians. Ephesus was the center of one of Paul's most successful and protracted campaigns. He had established a firm Christian community here and had made many friends. It is surprising, therefore, to encounter in the letter to the Ephesians a general religious and ethical tract rather than a warm personal greeting. The theme of Ephesians is the unity of the church in Christ:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. . . . There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who above all and through all and in all . . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ [3:17-19; 4:4-6, 13].⁸

Colossians contains Paul's philosophy of religion, especially as opposed to Gnosticism and other contemporary forms of thought.⁹ Here the apostle emphasizes his doctrine of reconciliation achieved by mystically dying and rising with Christ, a thought pattern that may reflect some of the teachings of the mystery cults. He concludes with the information that he is sending Tychicus to Colossae "and with him Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of yourselves."

Onesimus was a runaway slave whom Paul converted in

⁸ The authenticity of Ephesians as Pauline has been questioned by some scholars, who regard it, like the Pastorals, as coming from a follower of Paul at a much later date. For arguments against Pauline authorship see Enslin, *op. cit.*, pp. 294 ff.

⁹ Gnosticism was an oriental system of speculative belief emphasizing esoteric knowledge or mystical illumination.

Rome and was now sending back to Philemon, his master. The letter to Philemon is one of the most intriguing and intimate documents to come out of antiquity and reveals the downright humanity of the great campaigner.

Other Letters

The Epistle to the Hebrews (80–90 A.D.), like the Paulines, has both an occasional and an intellectual purpose. It was written during the reign of Domitian to encourage Jewish Christians, who were enduring bitter persecution and suffering. In the midst of such peril, ostracism, and risk of martyrdom, the loyalty of Christians was put to an almost intolerable test. The author of this epistle has but one purpose, and that is to warn these Christians against relapse and to plead with them to keep their faith. This leads to the thesis of the book: the finality of Jesus and the Christian religion.

This thesis is established on the background of Judaism, and the argument appears to be confined to Jewish thought; but that is true only in the terms used. The logic is thoroughly Greek, and the author, following the Platonic doctrine that earthly manifestations are imperfect copies of the absolute or heavenly reality, argues that Jesus' sacrifice for mankind takes precedence over all Jewish sacrifices and is the perfect medium for the redemption of mankind. The Jewish sanctuary, the Law, and the high priest were merely a preparation for the New Covenant. God has made his final provision for salvation in Jesus Christ, his son. In the author's idea of Jesus' cosmic significance as an emanation from God, he shows an affinity to the Fourth Gospel and Philo.

We do not know who wrote Hebrews or to whom it was addressed. Its doctrine and style rule out any possibility of Paul and point to some Alexandrian Jew as the author. No

better conclusion has been found than that of Origen: "God only knows who wrote this book." Whoever did write it was a well-educated person; his Greek is, with Luke's, the most classical in the New Testament.

The other seven letters — James, I and II Peter, I, II and III John, and Jude — are called the Catholic Epistles, and in these instances the term seems rather appropriate, as they are more general in character than Paul's. With the exceptions of I Peter and I John, these letters were held to be noncanonical by Eusebius and other early authorities and never really attained equality with the rest of the New Testament.

James is a general religious tract rather than a letter and is traditionally thought to be from the brother of Jesus. Its strong ethical emphasis echoes the teaching of Jesus and the prophets: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only. . . . What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? . . . Faith apart from works is barren. . . . You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone."¹⁰ This does not contradict the doctrine of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews that "the just shall live by faith" rather than the works of the Law, since the "works" that Paul thought were inadequate were the ceremonial performances of religion. Salvation is not to be earned by sacramental works; it is a gift. "Works," to the author of James, means good deeds, moral and social proof of one's faith. With him, mystical faith must be accompanied by ethical action, a teaching that coincides with the best of Jesus and Paul.

The First Epistle of John resembles the Fourth Gospel so closely in style, thought, and vocabulary that common authorship is fairly certain. It probably comes from the same time

¹⁰ 1:22; 2:14; 2:20b; 2:24.

as the Fourth Gospel. It is directed against a form of Gnosticism (Docetism) that denied the earthly existence of Jesus. The author emphasizes the reality of Jesus as the Christ and admonishes his readers to live in the "fellowship of love." He defines the religious life as obedience to the commandments of God, loyalty to Christ as the representative of God, and love of others.¹¹ His purpose is to assure his readers of the certainty of their faith in Christ. He emphasizes brotherly love and morality, which were minimized by the Gnostics. In defining religion as bearing witness to Christ, loving one's neighbor, and performing altruistic deeds, the author of this epistle has preserved the essence of the Christian message.

The other two Johannine Epistles have less theological and religious value, but they do add to our knowledge of the rapidly developing ecclesiastical organization at the end of the first century of the Christian Era. First Peter was written by a follower of Peter to some Christians in Asia Minor to encourage them under persecution. The style and viewpoint of II Peter reveal not only a different author but one who is superficial and somewhat lacking in sincerity. Second Peter was undoubtedly dependent upon Jude, which is a warning against those who would undermine the faith of the Christians. Jude is strongly apocalyptic, resembling the Book of Enoch.

2. *Gospel*

The Synoptic Problem

The first thing that impresses the attentive reader of the Four Gospels is the similarity of the first three and the unique-

¹¹ 2:3-5; 4:2, 3; 4:7-12.

ness of the fourth. Because Matthew, Mark, and Luke present a common view of the life and teachings of Jesus and tell substantially the same story, they are called the Synoptic Gospels. The term "synoptic" is Greek and means "to see together"; it is not too apt, but as applied to these three gospels it suggests their parallelism and common point of view.

The agreement among the three frequently extends to the smallest details. This striking similarity often continues for long sections, so that the three books can be arranged in parallel columns in the form of a synopsis or harmony. But

MARK

12:36, 37: David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit declared, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet." David himself calls him Lord; so how is he his son? And the great throng heard him gladly.

6:41-43: And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.

MATTHEW

22:43-45: He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'Thy Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son? "

14:19, 20: Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

coexistent with this parallelism is a divergence no less striking. The combination of these two phenomena has given rise to the so-called Synoptic Problem, which aims to investigate the question of mutual relationship and to propose a theory that will account for both the similarities and the differences. This literary problem is one of the most complex in the history of Biblical Criticism, and its implications are highly important for the history of Christianity.

To break open the problem for the reader, let us note first some of the identities of language in the three books.

LUKE

20:42-44: For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet." David thus calls him Lord; so how is he his son?

9:16, 17: And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

MARK

2:10, 11, 12: "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

MATTHEW

9:6, 7: "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he then said to the paralytic — "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home.

Obviously, the individualities of these three writers have been overruled by some external norm. Their versions are clearly dependent upon some common original, for such detailed identities of language cannot be coincidental. In fact, practically all of Mark can be found in Matthew and Luke in outline and content.¹²

On closer inspection we notice that Matthew and Luke have accounts of the life of Jesus before his baptism and after his death. This material is not found in Mark, and in it Matthew and Luke are completely independent of each other, but, starting with the baptism of Jesus, they coincide with Mark.¹³ In narrative material Matthew and Luke seem to be in agreement with Mark, but sometimes this agreement exists between Mark and Matthew; at other times, between Mark and Luke.

¹² For a demonstration of triple agreement, see R. L. Finney, *Huck's Synopsis of the First Three Gospels* (New York, 1907). (A. Huck, *Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien* [in Greek] was revised in 1931.)

¹³ According to the best and most ancient manuscripts, Mark ends at 16:8. Verses 9 to the end represent a later addition.

LUKE

5:24, 25: "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the man who was paralyzed — "I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home." And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God.

We must note also that the chronological order of all three gospels is fundamentally the same. They present the same outline of the life of Christ: baptism, temptation, Galilean ministry, journey to Jerusalem, and passion. Further, there is a strange agreement in the selection of material. How does it happen that from the entire life of Jesus these three biographers give us the incidents from only forty or fifty days at the most and, furthermore, select for the most part the same incidents? That these three writers would choose such a relatively small portion of the life of Jesus for portrayal is astonishing, to say the least. (In Mark, only thirty-one days can be identified!) Would it not seem that this verbal correspondence and the agreement in outline, chronology, and selection of material all point to some common model?

Equally impressive, however, is the element of divergence. For example:

MARK

The Young Ruler:

10:17: And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

The Great Confession:

8:29: And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are Christ."

The Blind Beggar Incident:

10:46: And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

The Temptation Story:

MATTHEW

19:16: And, behold, one came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?"

16:15, 16: He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

20:29: And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him.

4:1-11: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every

LUKE

18:18: And a ruler asked him,
“ Good Teacher, what shall I
do to inherit eternal life? ”

9:20: And he said to them,
“ But who do you say that I
am? ” And Peter answered,
“ The Christ of God.”

18:35: As he drew near to
Jericho, a blind man was sit-
ting by the roadside begging.

4:1-12: And Jesus, full of the
Holy Spirit, returned from
the Jordan, and was led by
the Spirit for forty days in
the wilderness, tempted by
the devil. And he ate noth-
ing in those days; and when
they were ended, he was hun-
gry. The devil said to him,
“ If you are the Son of God,
command this stone to be-
come bread.” And Jesus an-
swered him, “ It is written,

MARK

MATTHEW

word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'” Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give his angels charge of you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be-gone, Satan! for it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and administered to him.

Mission of the Twelve:

6:8, 9: He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.

10:10: No bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the laborer deserves his food.

LUKE

‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”

How are we to reconcile these and many other variations? Are we to suppose that Jesus was tempted twice, each time in a different order? Which of the three gospels reports correctly Peter's confession? Did Jesus command his disciples to take staves and sandals, or did he prohibit them? Did Jesus heal one blind man or two; and was it on the way to or from Jericho?

The discrepancies are easier to understand than the agreements. When one considers that nothing was written about Jesus for some thirty years after his death, it is not surprising to find changes in context and variations in report. Matthew and Luke invariably differ in the context of any given incident involving discourse. Difference between the two in content is illustrated in one of the Beatitudes. Matthew 5:3 says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . .," while Luke 6:20 says: "Blessed are you poor. . . ." Additions and omissions on the part of Matthew and Luke can be attributed to their special sources or to differences in point of view. The textual problem must also be borne in mind. Repeated copying of the papyri and manuscripts in the period between the original autographs and the making of the fourth-century manuscripts would account for variations in phraseology and the reporting of incidents. Our Greek Testament is at best a resultant of many different manuscripts.

Such is the Synoptic Problem. But what is the solution? One of the earlier suggestions was that the form of the gospel record of all three books was fixed during the period of oral transmission. This oral theory held that a stereotyped tradition of teaching was passed about by word of mouth and was known and used by our three writers. Oral teaching was common practice with the Jews, who were reluctant to put their teachings into written form. This theory might explain certain variations, but it does not account for the material

common only to Matthew and Luke and not found in Mark. Oral tradition, furthermore, would not produce such minute and parenthetical identities of language; nor can it account for the peculiar selection of common material and the high degree of fixity in the order and content of the tradition.

The solution must be found in a documentary, rather than an oral, theory. It has been suggested that for the triple tradition (material common to all three gospels) there must have been a common earlier source, a complete gospel. This idea breaks down in the face of the double tradition, in which Matthew and Luke are identical to the extent of some two hundred verses of discourse, which are totally absent from Mark. If Mark had such a source, it is inconceivable that he would have deliberately eliminated practically all the teaching material (Sermon on the Mount) and confined his report to narrative. The same argument rules out the priority of Matthew as a common source for Mark and Luke.

On closer scrutiny, it is to be noticed that Mark is the shortest book of the three, having only sixteen chapters, as compared with twenty-four for Luke and twenty-eight for Matthew. Mark bears a primitive appearance; it is blunt, unpolished, and unedited and lacks doctrinal interpolations. It gives the impression of originality and firsthand familiarity with detail. Its directness and realism indicate priority; and the vivid, fresh description of events gives the reader the feeling that the author either was an eyewitness to the original scene or had been with someone who was. The reader of Mark cannot escape the conviction that here he is on more historical ground than in the other three gospels.

The priority of Mark is not mere conjecture; we have as further evidence an interesting and valuable extra-biblical testimony. Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century writes as follows: "And the

presbyter said this also: 'Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately, not in the proper order however, all that he remembered of what had been said or done by Christ.' For he did not hear the Lord nor did he follow him, but later, as I have said, accompanied Peter, who gave his instructions according to the needs, but paid no attention to the exact order of the Lord's discourses. So that Mark made no mistake when he wrote down some things from memory, for he had but one thing in mind: neither to overlook any of the things he had heard nor to falsify any of them."¹⁴

Here, then, is our evidence: the fact that the bulk of Mark is reproduced in Matthew and Luke; the primitive appearance of Mark; the statement of Papias that Mark was Peter's interpreter and wrote down his reminiscences; the fact that Matthew and Luke can be reconstructed on the basis of Mark, while the reverse does not hold; and the fact that where Matthew and Luke write independently at the beginning and at the end of their gospels they are different, but when they follow Mark they coincide with that work in narrative material. In view of this evidence, we conclude that Mark must have served as a written source for Matthew and Luke.

This conclusion solves the first half of our problem: namely, the triple tradition (passages common to all three gospels). We still have to deal with the double tradition, in which we find some two hundred verses of discourse material identical in Matthew and Luke, none of which is in Mark. This material consists of sayings of Jesus — Sermon on the Mount, parables, and other discourses — which take a similar form, sometimes identical, in Matthew and Luke. Such a parallel can only point to a second documentary source for

¹⁴ Papias' own work is not extant. The quotation is found in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* iii. 39, 15.

Matthew and Luke. Here again we have a statement from Papias to the effect that "Matthew composed the Logia in the Hebrew language and everyone interpreted them as he was able."¹⁵

This leads to the second conclusion: Matthew and Luke were dependent upon a second written source, now lost, called the Logia or Q (from German *Quelle* or source). The double tradition (material common to Matthew and Luke) can be reconstructed by extracting the duplicated sayings in the two gospels. This is evidently the substance of the Logia collected by Matthew. The later edited Gospel of Matthew was probably named after this disciple.

We have thus arrived at the Two-Source theory, which is the solution of the Synoptic Problem almost universally accepted today. This hypothesis states, in short, that Matthew and Luke are dependent upon two documentary sources: the Gospel of Mark and a Greek translation of the Aramaic Logia of Matthew, the follower of Jesus.

This theory has been held by most scholars for some fifty years. It has been supplemented more recently by the Four-Source theory, which, boiled down to its essentials, merely means that Matthew and Luke each had, in addition to Mark and Q, a special source. A more detailed investigation of these two gospels reveals a small amount of material unique to each. For this there must have been a local or special source in which each found some data not available to the other. The source for material unique to Matthew is called M, and material found only in Luke is attributed to a hypothetical source L.¹⁶ Tradition in Matthew and Luke relating to the birth and passion of Jesus could well come from these two

¹⁵ *Ibid.* iii. 39, 16.

¹⁶ See B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study in Origins* (London, 1930).

sources, as it is different in each. Streeter has suggested that the final edition of Luke is a composite of Mark and an earlier form of his own gospel based on the Logia and L. This earlier edition is called Proto-Luke.

Recent research in some quarters tends to oppose the existence of Q as a source for Matthew and Luke and as identical with the Logia mentioned by Papias. According to these critics, the assumption that Matthew and Luke wrote independently is unwarranted, as is the theory that the double tradition points necessarily to a second written source — Q. The double tradition is solved, rather, by the dependence of Luke upon Matthew, who wrote earlier.¹⁷ Such a theory is suggested in Luke's preface, where he speaks of previous writers who had "taken in hand to draw up a narrative" of the life of Jesus.

One or two questions remain. Did Mark know the Logia? Much has been written on this question, but it seems like an unreasonable assumption, for it is highly improbable that if Mark had access to the teaching of Jesus he would deliberately omit from his gospel such important material. Another question relates to the so-called Proto-Mark or earlier Mark. To account for the discrepancy between the more polished form of Matthew and Luke in the triple tradition, which is based on the cruder, blunter style of Mark, and also to account for some narrative material in Matthew and Luke that is not in Mark, it has been proposed that Matthew and Luke had before them an earlier edition of Mark. This theory is somewhat superfluous, since these few discrepancies could be explained by independent sources or independent editing of the same source, presumably Mark.

¹⁷ See Enslin, *op. cit.*, pp. 426 ff.

Characteristics of the Synoptics

Mark. Each Gospel has its own peculiarities and telltale characteristics. Mark, as Papias testified, was Peter's interpreter and set down the reminiscences of the apostle. From Colossians 4:19 we gather that Mark was Barnabas' cousin, and in I Peter 5:13 he is referred to as Peter's "son." He may have been Peter's first convert. As a Diaspora Jew and a bilingualist, Mark was qualified to serve as an interpreter. It is possible that out of his experience with Peter he compiled his gospel.

Mark's style is noticeably terse, direct, and realistic. The word "straightway," or "immediately," occurs again and again throughout the book. There is something fresh and robust about this book. It speaks the language of the people with no attempt at elegance or polish. The author is economical in his choice of words, hastening on from one dramatic scene to the next. He avoids the abstractions of theology and caters to no school. This realism argues for priority. Here we are closest to the historic and human personality of Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark has neither introduction nor conclusion. It opens with a brief description of the baptism of Jesus and closes abruptly with his death. There is great doubt as to the authenticity of the last twelve verses, which speak of Jesus' resurrection. They are not found in our two most ancient and most reliable manuscripts, Aleph and B, the Sinaitic Syriac version, most of the manuscripts known to Eusebius, and the copies used by Jerome. Furthermore, they reveal a different style from the foregoing material. For these reasons, Mark 16:9-20, spaced separately in the American Standard Version and the Revised Standard Version, is commonly

thought to be a later addition to the gospel, influenced by the endings of Matthew and Luke. Other manuscripts have a different and shorter ending consisting of one verse, which also is universally considered to be a later addition to the original gospel.

There is much discussion, as with all the books of the New Testament, about the date of Mark, but 70 A.D. has been the most acceptable. Mark wrote chiefly for gentile readers; his theme was the growing hostility toward Jesus, culminating in his death. Some Latinisms in his style and the fact that he was with Paul in Rome suggest that the book was written there, but the evidence is not too conclusive.

Matthew. Matthew was a man of motive and method. His chief interest was to demonstrate to Jewish readers that Jesus was the Messiah and the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic hope. That was his theme, and he really worked it for more than it was worth, especially in his use of the proof-text technique. In support of his Messianic doctrine he quotes the Old Testament at every turn and frequently uses a verse completely out of context to illustrate the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the life of Jesus.

The absurdity of the proof-text method is seen in Matthew 2:14, 15: "And he arose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.'" The quotation is from Hosea 11:1 where the prophet (in the eighth century B.C.) is reminding the Hebrews of God's care for them throughout their history: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." What Hosea was saying in retrospect (referring to the Exodus under Moses in 1225 B.C.), Matthew twists into the pre-

diction of the birth of Jesus, an event that occurred eight centuries later!

Due to Matthew's single-mindedness as a proof-text editor, Christians from that day to this have labored under the delusion that the Old Testament was merely a preparation for and a prediction of Jesus. "This was done in order to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet" became for Matthew the key to practically everything that Jesus did.

The redeeming feature of Matthew's gospel is its structure: the teachings of Jesus are arranged to present a well-coordinated theme. Because of this systematic arrangement, chapters 5, 6, and 7 are usually referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. According to Matthew, Jesus, following his baptism and temptation, delivered, at the outset of his public ministry and in one address, practically all of his teachings. This is psychologically inconceivable. Are we to suppose that Jesus, an Oriental, delivered a long series of disconnected epigrams, all on one occasion and without parabolic expansion or extended interpretation? Proof that this did not take place is seen in the Gospel of Luke, where the same teachings are found scattered throughout the career of Jesus, as certainly they must have occurred. The phrase "Sermon on the Mount" therefore represents not a historical fact but an editorial assembling of the sayings of Jesus into a compact unit.

The ethical teaching of Jesus as arranged by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount may be outlined as follows:

- 5:1-12: The Beatitudes, containing the qualifications for membership in the Kingdom of God.
- 12-16: The social responsibility of the followers of Jesus.
- 17-48: *Spirit versus Letter*: Jesus defines religion as principle rather than law. For the laws on murder, divorce, adultery, oaths, revenge, and hate he substi-

tutes the principles of fraternal love, the family inviolate, chastity of mind, personal integrity, unselfishness, and universal good will.

6:1-18: *Form versus Reality*: Worship as internal experience rather than an ostentatious display.

19-34: *Things versus Values*: Dedication of self to the ends for which we live rather than the means by which we live.

7:1-12: *Self versus Others*: The Golden Rule of sympathetic understanding.

13-23: *Creed versus Conduct*: The inseparable connection between religion and morality. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

24-27: *Conclusion*: Jesus' authority as a teacher and critic, an authority based on the appeal to conscience, reason, and insight.

In addition to the Sermon on the Mount proper, there are several extraneous passages that are important both for their intrinsic message and for the light they shed on the growing conflict with the Pharisees.

9:14-17: *Quantity versus Quality*: Religion with Jesus was not just a patch on the garment of life but a new cloth, not a spoke in the wheel but the hub itself, the central motivating force of life; not a specific formula of things to do or believe but a basic attitude toward life, not a quantitative form but a qualitative force.

12:1-13: *Institutions versus Values*: The well-being of man is more important than sacerdotalism with its rigid laws. Man is of more value than the Sabbath.

15:1-20: *External Form versus Internal Feeling*: Dietary prescriptions and ceremonial washings miss the heart of religion. Moral defilement is more serious than ceremonial defilement.

The "Sermon on the Mount" is followed by a similar block of material depicting in climactic sequence the miraculous deeds of Jesus (chapters 8, 9). Apparently Matthew wished to demonstrate to his Jewish readers that Jesus was a miracle-worker. He has a tendency to accentuate the miraculous element as compared with his Markan source.

In addition to his systematic arrangement of the teachings of Jesus, the compiler of the book of Matthew also offers an opportunity for us to observe the self-consciousness of Jesus in his life-struggle. The interpretation of the career of Jesus has always been, and still is, a controversial task, but, looking at it from the vocational standpoint and allowing for Matthew's typical oriental imagery, we can reconstruct from the gospel several important days of decision in Jesus' life. These provide the key to both his personality and his mission.

The first is *The Baptism* (Matt. 3; Luke 3:21, 22; Mark 1:9-11). This experience was the dedication of Jesus to his lifework. It was here that he came into the full consciousness that he was to become a leader, a prophet, and that God had chosen him for this task. This was followed by a period of meditation and decision called *The Temptation* (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13). Jesus had to decide at the outset what *kind* of Messiah he would be. The popular expectation of a political leader of the Jews was widespread and rabid. He had only to indicate his desire to be such and he would be proclaimed the fulfillment of all Jewish hopes.

The Temptation experience can be interpreted as a dramatic description of a great mental and moral struggle that

continued throughout his career. It was not simply an event in the beginning of his ministry, after which all was clear sailing, but, rather, a problem that he faced every day of his life. Should he fall in with the popular demand and capitalize on his powers for his own advancement (turn stones into bread)? Should he try to impress the people by signs and wonders (cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple)? Should he compromise with the nationalists and give them what they wanted (fall down and worship Satan)? His decision was to become the humble teacher, the suffering servant, and not the political Messiah.

Jesus had set his sails, determined his direction. Now, as he set about his mission, the feverish demands to lead a political movement swept upon him from all sides and especially from his own disciples, who really did not understand him. From time to time he went into seclusion to rethink his initial decision. One of these occasions was *The Transfiguration* (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). Occurring midway in the ministry of Jesus, this experience can be considered the watershed of his career. Here Jesus meditates on his mission. Should he go on? Is it God's will that he pursue the course he has thus far taken? At this time he gets high enough above things to see them in proper perspective. He looks backward and sees the continuity between himself and the prophets in their moral reform. He takes stock of his own spiritual resources and receives greater power from God. He also sees more clearly into the future and determines to see it through in spite of possible violence and death.

The time comes when Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem, for only in that city could he hope to accomplish his ends. His entrance into the city is called *The Triumphal Entry* (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38). How triumphal it was is a moot question. Was Jesus the kind of

Messiah whom the people welcomed at the edge of the city? It may be that theirs was a mistaken celebration. Jesus rode into the city as a prophet and an unarmed teacher, not as the king of the Jews. The demonstration had no results. On the contrary, upon entering the city Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple, an act that precipitated his arrest. Perhaps Jesus permitted rather than enjoyed the celebration, for he knew that the people who welcomed him that day could easily demand his death on the next.

Jesus' final decision day was at *Gethsemane* (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:13-42; Luke 22:40-46). Here, forsaken by his closest followers, he fights out his last great decision. Perhaps it is not necessary to die a death of violence in order to accomplish his mission. Perhaps there is some other way. "Let this cup pass from me. . . . Nevertheless thy will be done." His struggle with destiny reaches its climax, and he emerges triumphant.

The key to Jesus' character and his career is found in the continuity of his moral struggle from The Wilderness to The Garden. If Jesus had no choice and all was predetermined, these decisions are meaningless; but if Jesus' battle was fought on the human plane, we are here face to face with something that can be called moral divinity.

There is in this gospel a strong Judaistic element, which might represent a subsidiary source. It certainly stamps the compiler as a Jew, well versed in the Old Testament and writing with a particularistic point of view. Matthew's gospel is to be dated about 80 A.D.

Luke. Luke is a gentile writer, and his Greek approaches the classical style, whereas all the other books of the New Testament, with the exception of Hebrews, are written in a more colloquial form. From the preface to the end of the

book, the reader is conscious of the literary touch, the hand of the artist. In style and arrangement of material, the author shows himself to be a finished writer and a man of fine sensitivity and taste. Luke is the schooled man. Renan called the Gospel of Luke "the most beautiful book ever written."

There are three references to Luke in the New Testament: Philemon 5:24, II Timothy 4:11, and Colossians 4:14. In the last passage he is referred to as Paul's physician. There is a certain amount of medical terminology in the book, but this point has been given undue emphasis as an argument for Lukan authorship. As a doctor, Luke defined salvation as health of mind and body and saw in the person of Jesus the Great Physician. He takes pains to show the kindness and grace of Jesus. He is interested in Jesus' association with women and children and with the poor. There is a tender sympathy here that is not found in the other gospels.

Because of the emphasis on social reform, Luke's book has been called the Social Gospel or the Gospel of Humanity. Here are found two of the greatest parables — the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. The broad humanitarianism of Luke is reflected in his interpretation of Jesus' teachings and deeds. He defends the Samaritans and is pro-gentile in his sympathies. Jesus' mission, according to Luke, was to "preach good news to the poor, . . . proclaim release to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed. . . ."

Luke's theme of the value of man in the sight of God is reflected in his parables, which present the truth of the gospel more eloquently than abstract teachings.

15:11-24: *The Prodigal Son.* The overtones of this pearl of all parables reveal Jesus' philosophy of life. The pursuant love of God is limited by the will of

man. God's attitude of love is constant, but man must turn of his own will to God. God's forgiveness is unconditional. Man creates his own destiny.

18:9-14: *The Pharisee and the Publican.* You get as you bring. The Pharisee brought conceit and perceived nothing from the service of worship. The publican brought humility and a receptive spirit and went home blessed.

10:25-37: *The Good Samaritan.* This story shows the subtlety of Jesus in suggesting that a Samaritan could be good. Here is the teaching that true neighborliness is not reciprocal or calculating but is unbounded and goes beyond the line of duty.

The Fourth Gospel

Considerable water passed over the dam, theologically, between the writing of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. As the reader proceeds from the first three to the Fourth Gospel, he finds himself in another world. He is immediately struck by the difference in language, concepts, and viewpoint. Whereas the Synoptics place the ministry of Jesus mostly in Galilee, the Fourth Gospel places it in Jerusalem. The Synoptics attempt to describe the events in the life of Jesus in the order of their occurrence; the Fourth Gospel has no interest in chronology. In the Synoptics, the cleansing of the temple takes place at the end of Jesus' public ministry; in the Fourth Gospel it occurs at the outset of his career. The first three gospels picture Jesus as a friend of all kinds of people; he is popular, intimate, lovable. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel has only a limited circle of friends, is completely aloof, and is personally opposed to certain groups, such as the Pharisees.

The miracles of the Synoptics are exaggerated and heightened in John. The atmosphere of the Synoptics is on the whole irenic; that of the Fourth Gospel is controversial. The dominant interest of the Synoptics is biographical; that of the Fourth Gospel is doctrinal. The Jesus of the Synoptics grows in his self-consciousness as Messiah; the Jesus of John is the same divine creature throughout, the Eternal Word, the Son of God. The sayings of Jesus in the Synoptics are short, practical, and ethical; in John they are lengthy, abstruse, and metaphysical. In the Synoptics, Jesus calls the people to faith in God; in John, he insists that they believe in him. In the Synoptics, Jesus is the man of Galilee; in the Fourth Gospel, he is part of the Godhead.

It is not to be supposed that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are without a theological interest; they do have the miraculous element, and they speak of Jesus as Lord. But the general contrast is none the less real. In passing from one tradition to the other, the reader can only ask himself: "Is this the same Jesus?" The explanation can only be that the author of the Fourth Gospel is writing at a much later date (100–110 A.D.) and in a different place and is profoundly affected by Greek speculative thought. That his interpretation of Jesus as the Word shows the influence of Philo needs no argument.¹⁸

Early Christian tradition connected the Fourth Gospel with the apostle John, son of Zebedee, but in view of the contrast between the Synoptics and the Johannine tradition, it is inconceivable that this gospel could have come from the Galilean fisherman. Rather, it is more likely to be the reflections of an Alexandrian philosopher, who was familiar with

¹⁸ Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of Alexandria (late first century B.C. and early first century A.D.) who tried to harmonize Greek philosophy with orthodox Jewish thought.

Philonic thought. That he was Jewish is not too clear, but it is pretty certain that he was not a resident of Palestine.

This gospel stands as the christological bridge between the apostolic following of Jesus as the Messiah (however that term may be interpreted) and the Nicene period, when deification was practically complete and Jesus was regarded, at least by the orthodox world, as the Son of God with cosmic significance.

Historically the Fourth Gospel is of doubtful worth. Doctrinally it has wielded more influence on Christendom than the Synoptics. Perhaps both traditions are valuable: Jesus, the ethical teacher, and Christ, a symbol of the Eternal.

3. History

Acts

There are three reasons for thinking that the author of Acts was Luke. The first argument is that of the Prologue: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach. . . ." What was this "first" or "former" book? Obviously, it was the Gospel of Luke, which was also addressed to Theophilus: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed." It follows that both books are by the same man.

The second argument for Lukan authorship is that of the so-called "we-sections" of Acts. There are four passages, taken from the travel diary of the author, in which he abruptly changes from the third person plural to the first person plural (Acts 16:10, 17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). The author of Acts must have been with Paul at Troas and Philippi on his second campaign (16:10-17), accompanied Paul from Caesarea to Rome (chap. 27) and been with the apostle in Rome (chap. 28). The men who were with Paul in Rome were Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Aristarchus, Demas, and Jesus Justus. They are specifically mentioned in Colossians 4:10-14 and Philemon 23, 24.

The author must be chosen from one of these six men. It is fairly clear from Acts 27:2 that only two people were with Paul on the voyage to Rome; one was Aristarchus, and the other, the unnamed author of the narrative: "And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica." Since the author mentions Aristarchus in the third person, we can be sure he is not the writer. The name of Mark can be eliminated because in Acts 15:39 we are told that Paul refused to take him on the second campaign. Epaphras, a resident of Colossae, was probably unknown to Paul until his third campaign in Ephesus. Demas and Jesus Justus can hardly be considered likely candidates for the authorship since they are minor figures and are not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. This leaves Luke as the only person who satisfies all the requirements.

The third argument for Lukan authorship of Acts is based on style. There are some words that are not found in other books and may thus be regarded as peculiar to Luke and

Acts. It has also been maintained that both Luke and Acts contain a certain amount of medical terminology, which would point to common authorship. Earlier critics like Harnack held to this argument, but more recently there has been a tendency to abandon it.

Some doubt has also been expressed regarding the worth of the "we-sections" as proof of Lukan authorship on the ground that the author shows too little knowledge of Paul's career to be a travel companion.¹⁹ It is thought that too many important events mentioned in Paul's letters are glossed over or are unknown to the author to justify our thinking that he was a travel companion of Paul.

There is little dissent, however, from the argument of the Prologue, which clearly points to Luke as our author. The dating of the book varies from 80 to 100 A.D. It seems clear that it was Luke's intention in these two books to trace first the origin of the gospel in Jesus and second the propagation of the gospel throughout the Roman world. The speeches of Paul as recorded in Acts are, of course, reproduced in Luke's style and are not verbatim reports.

The Book of Acts is important because it describes the most critical period in Christian history—a period about which there is little information. Acts can be divided into two sections: chapters 1–8 describe the growth of Christianity in Palestine among Jews under the leadership of Peter; and chapters 9–28 describe the spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean world under the impetus of Paul. Considered as a whole, Acts is the story of the birth and early growth of the church, first as "The Way" or Nazarene sect, and then as gentile Christianity, taking root in all the great centers of the empire. The author seems intent on showing

¹⁹ See Enslin, *op. cit.*, pp. 416 ff.

that the propagation of the gospel was accomplished without hindrance from the Romans.

Approximate chronology of the contents of Acts:

Crucifixion of Jesus	29/30
Conversion of Paul	35
First Visit to Jerusalem	38
Second Visit to Jerusalem	44
First Missionary Campaign	45-47
Council at Jerusalem	48
Second Campaign	49-52
Third Campaign	52-56
Imprisonment in Caesarea	56-58
Arrival in Rome	59
Death of Paul	64

4. *Apocalypticism*

Revelation

The Book of Revelation is the New Testament counterpart of Daniel, written against the background of the Roman domination. It must be interpreted in the light of the historical situation rather than as allegory, mystery, or prediction. The symbolic imagery of the book has let loose a flood of attempts in all ages to identify "the beast" with historic figures — Mohammed, the Pope, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Hitler. The book has always been used to predict wars and to date the end of the world. As a typical apocalypticist, the author looks for the near approach in his time of the end of the world and the judgment. Since this world has succumbed to the powers of evil, there must be another world where the

Christian martyrs will come into their own. Nero's persecution of the Christians, followed by the more widespread persecution of the cruel Domitian, could only mean that God himself would strike by sending Christ as the avenger and judge. There will be a judgment day when the faithful will be separated from the unfaithful, after which Christ will rule for a thousand years.

The book was written to encourage the Christians to stand firm against emperor-worship and to be faithful unto death. Domitian's persecution extended to Asia Minor, where emperor-worship was strong. It was to the seven churches in this province that Revelation was addressed.

Tradition assigns Revelation, along with the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles, to John, the son of Zebedee, but the book can hardly have been written before the end of the century, certainly too late to be from the hand of the disciple. Furthermore, the style of the Fourth Gospel is too much at variance to fit the author of Revelation. There is no evidence on authorship in the book itself. All we can conclude with any assurance is that the author was a Jew who had lived at Ephesus and who was later exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse. Internal evidence pointing to church conditions later than Paul's time, to the presence of Nicolaitanism and other heresies, and to the extended persecution of Domitian, which did not stop until his death in 96 A.D., indicates that the book must be dated at the end of the century.

Chapter Eight

Canonization of the New Testament

1. Reasons for a Second Bible

The Bible of the Christians in the first century was the Septuagint Old Testament, which included the Apocrypha. This was their canon of Scripture, and they gave no thought to the creation of another Bible. But by the end of the fourth century the Christian church had a New Testament that was equal to the Old in authority and inspiration. Our task in this chapter will be to trace the process by which the Christian literature of the first century achieved the status of sacred and authoritative canon.¹

The twentieth-century Christian takes the New Testament for granted. It is hard for him to realize that there was a period when Christians had no New Testament and a still longer period when they had one but they did not know what books were, or should be, in it! The books of the New Testament were not written as Scripture and for a long time were not read as Scripture. The "occasional" or local and, at times, self-centered character of Paul's letters is proof that neither Paul nor his readers thought there was anything sacred about them. We must, therefore, go back first of all to the period before the New Testament was a fact and ask: Why a *New Testament*?

¹ For the definition of "canon" see p. 103; see also C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1908), pp. 15-20.

During the quarter-century following the death of Jesus, nothing seems to have been written about his ministry or teachings. One reason for this inactivity was the common expectation of the Parousia or second appearance of Jesus, which the Christians derived from the older Jewish hope of a Messiah. If the world was soon to end and Jesus was to return shortly, why write books? Why prepare for the future? Furthermore, with eyewitnesses on hand — people who had heard and seen Jesus — there was no need to put the oral tradition into written form. For a generation, at least, an “interim” spirit dominated the early church. Even in the New Testament books themselves, an anticipatory or unsettled frame of mind is evident.

The sayings of Jesus were preserved through this period in oral form. “Daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). The stories of Jesus and his teachings were circulated by word of mouth and became more or less crystallized. Continued oral repetition would tend to produce a uniformity, a tradition. This was the “oral gospel” that Paul received (I Cor. 15:3, 4; II Thess. 2:15).

By the time Paul wrote his letters, “the word of the Lord” had taken on, if not scriptural authority, certainly an importance equal to that of the Law and the Prophets. First Corinthians 7:10–12 provides a graphic illustration of the differentiation Paul made between the authority of Jesus and his own opinion: “To the married I give charge, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband. . . . To the rest, I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever. . . .” In the first instance Paul is careful to point out that he is fortunate enough to have the teaching of Jesus (Cf. Matt. 19:5), but on the sec-

ond matter he is frank to admit that he is giving only his own views. It is therefore clear that for Paul the sayings of Jesus were sacred and authoritative. That Paul may have received some sayings of Jesus now lost is indicated in Acts 20:35: "In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The point is further illustrated in I Timothy 5:18, where the writer actually refers to a saying of Jesus as "Scripture" (Matt. 10:10).

With the failure of the Parousia to materialize and, also, with the spread of Christian missions, there arose a more obvious need for written records. The Logia underwent a transformation from oral to written form and then possibly from Aramaic to Greek. Mark's gospel appeared next, followed a decade later by Matthew and Luke, and still later by the Fourth Gospel. Meanwhile, Paul's letters and the other New Testament books were in existence, but, while they preceded the gospels in point of composition, their authoritative status came afterward.

In view of the fact that the Jewish Scripture was the only Bible for the Christians of the first century, it is logical to ask: What were the motives leading to the creation of a *New Testament*? The primary reason, which we have just described, was the growing importance of the words of Jesus. The phrase "The Scriptures and the Lord" is indicative of the emerging authority of the teachings of Jesus in the middle of the first century. There was also, from the earliest days, a theological interest in the death and resurrection of Jesus as related to the plan of salvation. The original tradition of the gospel was later supplemented by the apostolic tradition. The letters of Paul were lost sight of in the generation imme-

diately following the period of his writing. Mark, Matthew, and Luke, in fact, show no acquaintance whatever with the Pauline letters. However, the author of Revelation seems to have known them and to have been strongly influenced by the collection.

There were two other reasons for making a *New Testament*. Both are later developments. One was the natural desire for a document that would distinguish the new religion from the Jewish religion and from the current heresies. (The Old Testament canon also emerged in a time of crisis. Indeed, it would be safe to say that all canons arise in periods of crisis, along with the consolidation of the cult along doctrinal and organizational lines.) In the second century the Christian church was thrown into confusion by the presence of various sects or heresies — Montanism, Docetism, Marcionism, and Gnosticism — and a clarification of the basic Christian religion was imperative. Hence, the appeal to the books of the New Testament as authority. A political factor also hastened the process of canonization: the recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire was possible only when there was unanimity in regard to the Scripture as the authoritative doctrine.

The other basic reason for canonization was the need to distinguish between the spurious and the genuine, to separate orthodox books from the heterogeneous mass of literature, more or less Christian, that was accumulating in the last decade of the first and early decades of the second century.²

An analysis of these motives lying behind the creation of a New Covenant points unmistakably to two nuclei or criteria around which the emerging New Testament revolved: the

² See Adolf Harnack, *Origin of the New Testament* (New York, 1925), pp. 16 ff.

Lord and the Apostles. All the books of the New Testament, including Revelation, can be, and were, classified under these two heads. The first criterion pertained to anything by or about Jesus. That was logical enough, but how account for the second criterion, which referred to anything by or about an apostle? It is explained by the fact that the apostolic writings acquired value as attestation and support of the original tradition. Ultimately "tradition" and "attestation" were regarded as equally inspired or sacred.

Two determining factors in the process of canonization must be mentioned: one is automatic, and the other, arbitrary. Certain books were being used in the services of worship along with the Old Testament. These books were read, not because they were Scripture, but for purposes of edification. This fact gradually and automatically placed these books (especially the gospels) on a scriptural plane. The more deliberate process of canonization was the selection or citation by bishops and presbyters of certain accepted works as canonical. But the second process was simply a result of the first. Certain books won their place automatically by their own merit and apostolic character.

2. Evidence for the Existence of Books

From this point on, two processes must be differentiated. The first is the proof of the existence of books by reason of citations on the part of certain authorities. The second and more important process is the listing of books as actually canonical.

Evidence for the existence of some of the Pauline letters and Acts is first seen in Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians

(95 A.D.). Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (110 A.D.), in his seven epistles shows a familiarity with the gospels and is the first one definitely to mention a collection of Paulines. The Epistle of Barnabas (130 A.D.) mentions Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews. The Didaché (110 A.D.) uses Matthew and Luke, and Hermas (100 A.D.) mentions Mark. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (ca. 110 A.D.), refers to some of the Paulines and assumes that his readers in Asia and Macedonia know of Paul's letters.

Marcion (140 A.D.) was the first to arrange the Pauline letters systematically. His order was as follows: Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Romans, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Laodiceans (Ephesians?), Colossians, Philipians, and Philemon. Marcion represents a second stage in the evolution of a canon. He flatly rejected the Old Testament with its immature ideas of God and nationalistic messianism, and, since Paul had been, in his mind, at least, anti-Jewish, he regarded his ten letters, the "apostolicon," as the new Scripture. He added to these the Book of Luke, with certain editorial changes of his own, but ignored the other New Testament writings.

Marcion's revolutionary attitude forced the Christian world into a more serious evaluation of its writings. Certainly the church was immediately aroused to a greater respect for the ten Paulines. His neglect of the gospels and Acts spurred Irenaeus and others to come to their defense, and his polemical writing drove all conservative leaders to a more forthright position regarding the canon.

Justin Martyr (ca. 150 A.D.), in his *Apology for Christianity*, says that the gospels were read at church services along with the Old Testament, but Justin's comments cannot be used as testimony for the canonicity of the gospels. Justin

also knew the Apocalypse of John, Acts, I Peter, and the Paulines. Tatian (*ca.* 160 A.D.) in his *Diatessaron* or *Book of the Four* wove the Four Gospels together, omitting duplications. The composite gospel (at first in Greek and later translated, in 170 A.D., into Syriac) became the official Bible, along with the Old Testament, for the Syriac church and remained so until 435 A.D.

The Apostolic Fathers make no mention of Philemon, II Peter, II and III John, and Jude. These books seem to have had no status whatever throughout the first two centuries. On the other hand, several books, which were ultimately omitted from the canon, were not only popular in the first two centuries but were actually included as canon in the best manuscripts. These books were the Didaché (*ca.* 100 A.D.), Epistle of Barnabas (*ca.* 130 A.D.), the Apocalypse of Peter (*ca.* 125 A.D.), the Shepherd of Hermas (100 A.D.), and I Clement (95 A.D.).

3. *The Second Period*

The period of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, extending roughly from 170 to 220, offers clearer evidence for canonicity as compared with the fragmentary literature of the earlier period.

Irenaeus (135–200 A.D.), bishop of Lyons, writing about 180 A.D., is a strong witness for the canonicity of the Four Gospels. His emphasis on the gospels can be seen as a reaction to Marcion, who practically ignored all of them but Luke. The present order of the Four Gospels, i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, can be traced to Irenaeus. This order differed from that of the Western text, which interchanged

Mark and John. He recognized also as Scripture the following books: Acts, 12 Paulines (omitting Philemon and accepting the Pastorals), Apocalypse of John, I and II John, I Peter, and Hermas. He omitted from his list Hebrews, II Peter, II and III John, James, and Jude.

Clement (150–215 A.D.), bishop of Alexandria and head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, was equally emphatic in giving the Four Gospels unquestioned authority. In his *Stromateis* he is careful to distinguish the four from the Gospel of the Egyptians: "We do not find this saying in the four Gospels that have been handed down to us, but in that according to the Egyptians."³ Clement's New Testament consisted of the Four Gospels, Acts, 12 Paulines, Hebrews, I and II John, I Peter, Jude, Apocalypse of John, Epistle of Clement, Epistle of Barnabas, Apocalypse of Peter, and Shepherd of Hermas. The last two books were accepted by Clement without question. He rejected Philemon, II Peter, III John, and James.

Tertullian (155–222 A.D.), presbyter of Carthage and founder of Latin Christianity, accepted all the books of the present New Testament except Hebrews, II Peter, II and III John, and James. Tertullian knew the Latin version and spoke critically of it as a poor translation.

The opinions of Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian on canonicity coincided with the Muratorian Fragment, which is the earliest extant list of canonical books. This document was found in 1740 by Ludovico Antonio Muratori in the Ambrosian Library of Milan. It is usually dated about 195 A.D. and probably comes from the hand of Victor, bishop of Rome. It represents the official usage of the Roman church in the last quarter of the second century. The opening para-

³ *Stromateis*, Bk. 3: Ch. 13.

graph is mutilated and lacks the names of Matthew and Mark, but the document must have begun with their citation as the first and second gospels, for the torn piece says that "the Gospel of St. Luke, the physician and companion of Paul, stands third." This is followed by mention of the Fourth Gospel. The Muratorian list is as follows: the Four Gospels, Acts, 13 Paulines, Jude, I and II John, Apocalypse of John, Apocalypse of Peter, and Wisdom of Solomon. It omitted Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, and III John. It qualifies the inclusion of Philemon and the Pastorals, and mentions Paul's letter to the Laodiceans and "several others which cannot be received in the Catholic Church." An additional note informs us that some church leaders were not willing to have the Apocalypse of John and the Apocalypse of Peter read in the church.

Thus far we have gathered authoritative statements from four important areas of the Christian world: Gaul, Egypt, Africa, and Italy. On the basis of this information we are now prepared to summarize the situation at the end of the second century. By 200 A.D. the following books were universally accepted as canonical: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, 10 Epistles of Paul, Apocalypse of John, I John, and I Peter.⁴ The following can be considered borderline books, with most authorities rejecting the first six and accepting the last four: James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, Hebrews, Epistle of Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, and Apocalypse of Peter.⁵

⁴ The Apocalypse of John was rejected by the Greek and Syriac churches until the fifth century.

⁵ The Didaché (110 A.D.) was used by Clement of Alexandria and by Origen and was accepted in Egypt.

4. The Closing Period

The closing period of the canon (200–400 A.D.) sees the gradual acceptance of books that until this time were on the borderline — James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, Hebrews, and Apocalypse of John — and the rejection, generally, of such works as Barnabas, Hermas, Didaché, the Apocalypse of Peter, and I and II Clement. It must be borne in mind, however, that Barnabas, Hermas, and possibly the Didaché were included in *Codex Sinaiticus* and I Clement in *Codex Alexandrinus*.

The first authority in this period is Origen, the great Christian teacher of Alexandria and later of Caesarea. Origen indicated three groupings: (1) undisputed books: the Four Gospels, Acts, Apocalypse of John, I John, I Peter, 13 Epistles of Paul, and Hebrews; (2) doubtful or disputed books: II Peter, II and III John, Jude, James, Barnabas, Hermas, Didaché, and the Gospel According to the Hebrews; (3) false books: Gospel According to the Egyptians, Gospel of Basilides, Gospel of the Twelve, Gospel of Thomas, etc. Tertullian regarded Hebrews as unscriptural and inferior to the rest of the New Testament, whereas Origen thought more highly of it.

It is surprising that Origen accepted the Apocalypse of John without qualification, for, although it was popular in Africa and the West, it was generally rejected in the East. Dionysius, his pupil and successor as head of the Alexandrian school, took a cautious view, following the general opinion rather than what seemed to be his own, more critical view. He writes: "But I should not dare to reject the book since many of the brethren hold it with zeal, and I accept as

greater than my consideration of the book the general opinion about it."

Cyprian (200–258 A.D.), the influential bishop of Carthage, completely ignores James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Hebrews but often quotes Revelation. Lucian (d. 312 A.D.), founder of the Antiochian school, devoted most of his career to the study of the text of the Old and New Testaments. His edition of the New Testament probably had much to do with determining the text of the best Greek manuscripts. His canonical list excluded Revelation, II Peter, II and III John, and Jude.

Eusebius of Caesarea (230–340 A.D.) was the intellectual child of Origen and, as such, followed his master in his threefold grouping, which, in view of his wide knowledge of the church in many areas, can be considered definitive for the first part of the fourth century. In his *Ecclesiastical History* he recognized the Four Gospels, Acts, 13 Epistles of Paul, I John, I Peter, and Apocalypse of John. The "disputed books" included James, Jude, II Peter, and II and III John. A second list of disputed but more "spurious books" included Acts of Paul, Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter, Barnabas, and the Didaché. He has a special note to the effect that the Apocalypse of John ought to be included in the spurious list "as some reject it, while others think it ought to be accepted." No mention is made of Hebrews. He adds a final list of "heretical books," including the gospels of Peter, Thomas, and Matthaïas, and the Acts of Andrew, John, and others. The important thing about the list of Eusebius — and the same holds true with that of Origen — is that it represents not just his point of view but a consensus of the whole church, as far as he can ascertain the facts.

As far as the third and the first half of the fourth century

are concerned, we have seen that there is little change in the position of the "doubtful books." Turning now to Athanasius (293-373 A.D.), bishop of Alexandria, we find a decided change. In his *Easter Letter*, written in 367 A.D., he issues an authoritative list of canonical books, which is the same as our present New Testament. Not until the time of Athanasius were James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse of John unequivocally accepted as canon and Barnabas, Hermas, the Didaché, I Clement, and Apocalypse of Peter rejected. The latter books, plus some apocryphal gospels, were popular with the Egyptian Christians. It was the purpose of Athanasius to make a clear-cut distinction between the twenty-seven canonical books and the apocryphal ones. "In these alone," he writes, "is proclaimed the good news of the teaching of true religion. Let no one add to them nor remove anything from them." He does recommend the reading of the Didaché and Hermas by catechumens, but ultimately they, too, gave way to the exclusive use of the canonical works.

The Athanasian canon coincides with Jerome's New Testament as translated in the Vulgate, which became normative for the Western church. The councils of Laodicea (363 A.D.), Hippo (393 A.D.), and Carthage (397 A.D.), after considerable disagreement on some books, ratified the canon of twenty-seven books. The decree of the Council of Carthage (attended by Augustine) stated that "none except canonical writings are to be read in church under the title of divine Scripture." These councils, however, are not to be taken too seriously in the matter of the canon; they merely ratified a process that had already reached its consummation among the churches.

This virtually settled the question, at least for the West.

In the East there was less agreement. The canon of the Assyrian church, influenced by Tatian (172 A.D.), was for a long period confined to "the Gospel" (Tatian's *Diatessaron* — a synthesis of the Four Gospels or a weaving together of the four, omitting duplicating material), the Pauline Epistles, and Acts. This condition existed until Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, in 435 A.D. adopted the Antiochian canon of twenty-two books (II Peter, II and III John, and Jude were omitted). The Syriac church had from the earliest years excluded the Apocalypse and the Catholic Epistles. The Apocalypse, in fact, was not generally accepted in the Eastern church until after the fifth century. A Syriac New Testament of 508 includes it, and editions of the New Testament appearing in Asia Minor and Jerusalem likewise include it as canonical. The reluctance of the Greek church to accept the Apocalypse was balanced by the slowness of the African and Western churches to accept Hebrews.⁶

A thousand years elapsed before the discussion of the canon was resumed. With the coming of the Protestant Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, biblical research received a new impetus, the subjective or individual interpretation of Scripture became paramount, and Greek replaced Latin as the language of biblical scholarship. The result of all this was that the previously "disputed" books came in for fresh criticism. Luther questioned Hebrews, rejected the Apocalypse as unworthy of canonicity, called James an "epistle of straw," and rejected Jude. Erasmus questioned Hebrews and Revelation. Calvin and Zwingli regarded the Apocalypse as unbiblical.

As a necessary attempt to recover from the blow of the

■ The Apocalypse of John is not used today in the liturgy or lessons of the Greek church.

Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church held the Council of Trent (1546), at which time, more as a countermove against Protestantism than as an objective definition of the canon, the Roman church ratified once and for all the twenty-seven books of the canonical New Testament and pronounced anathema upon anyone who "does not receive the entire books with all their parts as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church."

And so the matter stands. For both Protestant and Catholic churches the canon as fixed in the fourth century has remained — and probably will remain — unchanged regardless of individual reservations or privately edited Bibles that omit certain sections.

Chapter Nine

Extracanoncal Literature of the New Testament

1. The Apostolic Fathers

Most important by far among all the noncanonical Christian writings is a list of books called the Apostolic Fathers. Their importance is attested by the inclusion of at least some of them in several canonical lists of the third and fourth centuries. But they are also valuable because of their antiquity, their use in the public services of worship in the early Christian church, and their content.

While these books were known and used by early Christians, they were not grouped under the title of Apostolic Fathers until the seventeenth century. They were first published as a collection in 1672 by Cotelier, who included Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. As manuscripts were discovered in the nineteenth century, the list was enlarged to include the Didaché, Papias, Quadratus, and Diognetus.¹

The study of early Christian literature would be incomplete without at least an introduction to these writings which were so closely interwoven with the New Testament books

¹ Some of the modern editors of the Apostolic Fathers are Harnack, Zahn, Kunk, Lightfoot-Harmer, Lake (Loeb Classical Library), and Bonner. For an excellent translation, the reader is referred to E. J. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers: An American Translation* (Chicago, 1950).

themselves. Most of them represent the authentic correspondence of early Christian leaders in the age following the apostles and are much more worthy than the apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Letters, and Apocalypses, which we shall discuss later.

The Letters of Clement

First and Second Clement came to light, at least in the Western world, when the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1628 presented the king of England with the famous fifth-century manuscript, *Codex Alexandrinus*, which contained these two early Christian documents. A complete Greek text of I Clement in a manuscript dated 1056 was discovered by Bryennius in 1873 in Constantinople and was subsequently published by him. Since that time, Syriac, Latin, and Coptic manuscripts have been found.

The First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians, from the standpoint of date and inclusion in early canonical lists, comes about as close to being an authentic New Testament book as any other piece of literature not included in the accepted twenty-seven books. Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* 200 A.D.) includes I Clement as Scripture, and a twelfth-century Harclean Syriac version contains First and Second Clement as integral parts of the New Testament. It was written about 95 A.D. from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth as a rebuke to the Corinthians for their lack of respect for church officers, particularly the elders. While the author is not named, it is usually considered to be from the hand of Clement, bishop of Rome (88–97 A.D.). Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* confirms Clement's authorship. Clement shows familiarity with the then recently collected letters of Paul and with Hebrews, but does not mention the gospels.

This letter, in fact, contains the first actual quotation of Paul's letters.

First Clement is reminiscent of I Peter and the Paulines in its instruction and counsel and is typical of that first form of Christian literature to come into existence — the letter. The author strongly condemns the rebellious spirit of the Corinthians toward their officers and reminds them of the humility of Christ. The authoritarian character of the letter may indicate the already growing importance of the Roman church. At least, it arrogated to itself the duty of instructing the church in Corinth. "Because of the sudden and repeated misfortunes and calamities that have befallen us," Clement writes, "we think we have been very slow in giving attention to the matters that are being discussed among you and to the foul and impious uprising, so alien and foreign to God's chosen people, which a few headstrong and wilful men have kindled to such a frenzy that your good name, respected and renowned and universally beloved, has come to be greatly reviled. . . ." ²

In passages where the author admonishes his readers to have patience in suffering, he is noticeably influenced by I Peter: "It is right and proper then, brethren, for us to be obedient to God rather than to follow those who in arrogance and disorder are the instigators of detestable jealousy. It is right therefore that we should not be deserters from what God wills." In his reference to Christ as High Priest, Clement clearly reflects the Book of Hebrews: "This is the way, dear friends, by which we find our salvation, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of our offerings, the protector and helper of our weakness."

The letter designated as II Clement is more likely from

² 1:2 (Goodspeed's translation).

the pen of Soter, bishop of Rome (166–174 A.D.). This fact is confirmed by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, where he quotes Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his reply to Soter. Since it was sent from Rome to Corinth, it was later attached to the letter of Clement. Unlike I Clement, this letter shows a familiarity with the Four Gospels and some apocryphal gospels. It urges the Corinthians to repent of their sins and “serve God with a pure heart.”

The Letters of Ignatius

In the first quarter of the second century, Asia Minor, particularly the environs of Ephesus, was the scene of much literary activity. From this great Christian center came some of the Johannine literature, the collection of Pauline letters, and the first collection of the Four Gospels. This region was also the scene of the writing of the seven letters of Ignatius.

The circumstances can be reconstructed from the letters themselves. Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, had been condemned to death, and now, in the charge of ten imperial guards, was being conducted to Rome to be thrown to the lions in the Colosseum. En route at Smyrna and Troas, Ignatius wrote these short but significant letters to the churches at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, and to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. He either had passed through or had met delegations from these churches.

The fact that he apparently wrote nothing before or after — at least nothing that has survived — might indicate that this sudden outburst was the result of the urging of the two bishops, Polycarp of Smyrna and Onesimus of Ephesus, who were anxious that he help them combat heresy in Asia Minor. This is borne out by the fact that Polycarp later recommends the Ignatian Epistles in his letter to the Philippians and also by

the rapidity with which all seven letters were publicized as a collection by the bishops.

The letters to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome were written from Smyrna, where Ignatius had been joined by an Ephesian deacon named Burrhus who served him and accompanied him to Troas, where he wrote the other three letters.

The Ignatian letters are valuable as the first description in Christian literature of Docetism. This heresy maintained that since Christ was divine he could not have had a material body but only one that seemed real.³ This view stemmed from a dualistic view that regarded the body — or any other material substance — as evil. The suffering of Jesus, therefore, was, in the mind of Docetists, not real but an appearance or semblance of suffering. In warning his readers against any schismatic tendency, Ignatius tells them to keep in line and obey their superiors. It is surprising to find such a strong ecclesiastical emphasis in a representative of the Eastern church — an emphasis that anticipates the hierarchical organization of a century later. “Flee from divisions and false teachings,” he writes to the Philadelphians, “follow like sheep where the pastor is. . . . Obey the bishop, the elders, and the deacons. . . . Do nothing without the bishop.”

A warm personal note also runs through these letters. The letter to the Ephesians is strangely reminiscent in style and content of Paul’s letter to Philemon: “And Crocus too, who is worthy of God and of you, in whom I have received an example of your love, has refreshed me in every way. . . . May I have profit of you always. I do not order you as though I were somebody. For though I am in chains for the name, I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ.”⁴

³ Greek, *δοκεῖν*, to seem.

⁴ Goodspeed’s translation, *op. cit.*, p. 207 ff.

The Didaché

In the middle of the second century of the Christian Era there appeared a manual of instruction called the *Didaché* or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. This little book became so well thought of that it was regarded by many later authorities as Scripture, or at least as one of "the disputed books." Its popularity probably accounts for its disappearance from view, as it became the nucleus for the more extensive works of the *Apostolic Church Ordinances* and *The Apostolic Constitutions*, which carry most of its content.

So the *Didaché* was lost sight of until 1875, when Bryennius discovered an eleventh-century manuscript containing the complete Greek text along with the Synopsis of the Scripture by Chrysostom, the Epistle of Barnabas, the two Epistles of Clement, and the Ignatian letters. Bryennius edited the *Didaché* in 1883. Since that time two Greek fragments and a Coptic fragment have been found.

The *Didaché* in turn is an expansion of an earlier form called the *Doctrina*. No Greek manuscript of this original source exists; hence, the title from the Latin recension of the Teaching. It contained about half of the *Didaché* and dates from about 100 A.D.

The *Didaché* is divided into two parts, the first of which is called "The Two Ways." The metaphor of "the two ways" is truly biblical and is found frequently in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 21:8, for instance, reads: "Thus sayeth the Lord: 'Behold I set before you the Way of Life and the Way of Death.'" The Psalms and the Proverbs speak of "The Way of the Wicked" and "The Way of Death." The New Testament abounds in references to "The More Excellent Way," "The Way of Wisdom," "The Way of

Peace," and "The Way of Righteousness."⁵ The earliest followers of Jesus were called "those of the Way" (Acts 9:2). Christianity was a way of life. It was not until Paul had established Antioch as his headquarters that the Nazarenes or "followers of the Way" were called Christians (Acts 11:26). The material on "the two ways" shows further similarity to Hermas and Barnabas but is primarily dependent upon the earlier Doctrina.

The list of sins in the description of the Way of Death recalls Paul's letters, especially Romans:

Two ways there are: one of life and one of death, but there is a great difference between the two ways, The way of life, then, is this: First, thou shalt love God who made thee; second, thy neighbor as thyself, and all things whatsoever thou wouldst not have befall thee, do not to another. Now of these words, the teaching is this: Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, for what thanks have ye if ye love them that love you? But love them that hate you and ye shall have no enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If anyone give thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; if anyone compel thee to go one mile, go with him two. To everyone that asketh thee, give, and ask not back; for to all the Father desires to give of his own gracious gifts.

My child, flee from every evil thing, and from everything like it. Be not inclined to anger, for anger leadeth to murder; nor jealous or contentious, nor passionate. My child, become not a liar, nor avaricious, nor presumptuous, nor evil-minded, for of all these things blasphemies are begotten. Become long-suffering and gentle and good. Thou shalt not exalt thyself, but with the righteous and lowly thou shalt dwell.

Now the way of Death is this: first of all, it is evil and full of curse: murders, adulteries, lusts, thefts, idolatries, sorcery, false

⁵ See also Deut. 30:15, 19; Matt. 7:13, 14. Cf. p. 79 on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

testimonies, hypocrisy, craft, arrogance, greed, hating truth and loving falsehood, loving vanity, pursuing revenge. May ye be delivered, children, from these.

These are the two ways: see that no one lead thee away from the teaching of the Lord.⁶

The author of the *Didaché*, probably a Jewish Christian, shows a strict reliance on the Gospel of Matthew, which he quotes verbatim in the Lord's Prayer (*Didaché*, chap. 8).

The second part of the *Didaché* (chaps. 7-16) consists of ecclesiastical regulations regarding baptism, the Eucharist, worship, and church organization. These regulations composed a manual for the instruction of catechumens preliminary to baptism and for Christian converts in general. The book is all the more interesting, coming from a period before any set rules were officially recognized by the church.

Some of these procedures are worth quoting:

Concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first declared all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water (running water). But if thou hast not living water, baptize in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm, but if thou hast neither, pour water three times upon the head. . . .

And concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks. First, concerning the cup: "We thank thee, our Father, for the holy wine of David, thy servant, which thou didst make known to us through Jesus, thy servant. Glory be to thee for ever." And concerning the broken bread: "We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge, which thou didst make known to us through Jesus, thy servant. Glory be to thee for ever. . . ."⁷

⁶ Selections from chaps. 1-6. (Selections from the *Didaché* and other extracanoncal writings are the author's translation.)

⁷ Selections from chaps. 7 and 9. Note that the Eucharist follows the Lukan order: wine and bread.

Reference is also made to the appointment of bishops and deacons along with prophets and teachers. It can truly be said that no extracanonical work is more important than the *Didaché*, containing, as it does, the first reproduction of Jesus' teachings outside the New Testament, the first instructions on the Sacraments, and early church procedures.

The Shepherd of Hermas

In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (100–110 A.D.) we encounter a still different literary form — a revelation or vision. Hermas was undoubtedly familiar with the Apocalypse of John but shows little or no dependence upon the Johannine work. It has more in common with Hebrews in its concern with repentance.

The Book of Hermas, the longest of all the Apostolic writings, is a series of visions, in some of which the author converses with an angel disguised as a shepherd. In using the figure of a shepherd, Hermas could have been influenced by any number of sources, such as Hebrews, I Peter, or Ephesians, where Christ or some Christian leader was spoken of as a shepherd. This shepherd issues various commands that epitomize the good life of repentance:

First of all, believe that God is one, and he created all things, and organized them and out of what did not exist made all things to be, and contains all things, but alone is himself uncontained. . . . Be sincere and simple-minded, and you will be like little children, who do not know the wickedness that destroys the life of men. Speak evil of no one, and do not enjoy hearing anyone do so. . . . Love truth and let nothing but truth proceed from your mouth, so that the spirit which God made to dwell in this flesh may be found truthful in the sight of all men. . . . Be patient and understanding and you will prevail over all evil actions and do all upright.⁸

⁸ From chap. 1, Commands. 1–5.

The Shepherd of Hermas received wide circulation and was included in the canonical lists of Clement of Alexandria and Origen and also in the *Codex Sinaiticus*. Numerous late Greek fragments have been found, but it has come down to us chiefly in its Latin form. There is also an Ethiopic version, indicating its popularity in Egypt and Abyssinia. A third-century papyrus of Hermas was found in 1922 and was later edited as the Michigan Papyrus.

The Epistle of Barnabas

The Epistle of Barnabas is important as an example of the early growth of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Barnabas was written about 125 A.D. in Alexandria, where the allegorical method had found earlier expression in Philo. As applied to the Old Testament, the allegorical system of Barnabas held that the Jewish Scripture was not to be taken literally but only figuratively and was not an end in itself but merely a prediction of the New Testament, Christianity, and Christ. This seems to have been a favorite method of Jewish-Christian writers who were appealing to a Jewish audience.

With chapter 18 the content and method of writing undergo an abrupt change. From allegory the author shifts to a series of commandments defining the Christian life. This section is clearly dependent upon an earlier form of the *Doctrina* or the *Didaché*, as it describes the Way of Life and the Way of Darkness. This indicates that the present Barnabas is made up of two previous forms. In fact, the two parts have been found in separate Latin recensions.

Both *Codex Sinaiticus* and the Bryennius manuscript found at Constantinople contained the complete Greek text of Barnabas. Clement of Alexandria included it in his New Testament, as did Origen, with some reservations.

Other Apostolic Writings

The remaining apostolic literature consists of a few short documents, one of which is the *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians*. This is to be read in connection with the Ignatian letters. After Ignatius had left Philippi en route to Rome, the Philippians sent word to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, requesting that he send them the letters of Ignatius that he held. This he did and accompanied them by his own letter:

The letters of Ignatius that were sent us by him and the others that we had in our possession we send you as you instructed us to do; they are appended to this letter, and you will be able to derive great benefit from them. For they embrace faith, steadfastness, and all the edification that pertains to our Lord. And if you learn anything definite about Ignatius himself and those who are with him, let us know.

Polycarp's letter contains the usual ethical admonitions. His admiration for Paul is clearly evident in several passages:

I write you this, brethren, not taking it upon myself, but you first invited me to. For neither I nor anyone else can follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he was among you, face to face with the men of that time, carefully and steadfastly uttered his teachings about truth, and when he was absent wrote you letters, by poring over which you will be able to build yourselves up in the faith that has been given to you.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp is an ecclesiastical letter describing in detail the death of Polycarp in the arena at Smyrna about 156 A.D. Although it was written by representatives of the church at Smyrna and sent to the church at Philmelium, it was given a much wider circulation and became the prototype of a specific form of literature called martyrology. Polycarp had been in Rome conferring with the Roman

bishop Anicetus about the Easter controversy. Upon his return to Smyrna, he was arrested and put to death by stabbing and burning. This document and the martyr literature that followed served to encourage the early Christians under persecution. The letter is preserved in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and there are several Greek and Latin manuscripts. Much of our information about Polycarp comes originally from the writings of Irenaeus.

Another valuable series of fragments collected by Eusebius is that of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis. In his book, *Interpretations of the Lord's Sayings* (125-150 A.D.), Papias recorded his interviews with prominent people who served as connecting links with the apostles.⁹ (Papias is quoted by many Christian writers before 1000 A.D.)

Other apostolic writings include the *Letter to Diognetus*, a piece of apologetic literature from the third century, and the *Apology of Quadratus*, a defense of Christianity by a second-century Christian philosopher.

2. The Apocryphal New Testament

Further removed from the New Testament proper, both in canonical status and in value as Christian literature, is the vast collection known as the New Testament Apocrypha.

The New Testament books survived as canon by virtue of their intrinsic worth. By the same token the apocryphal books lost out and ultimately disappeared from view because they had neither religious appeal nor historical value. On the whole, they represent an accumulation of legendary tradition

⁹ See pp. 165-167 for Papias' account of the writing of Mark and the Logia.

in the form of gospels, acts, letters, and apocalypses and lack the ring of authenticity found in the Synoptic Gospels and Paul. Many of them are lost and can only be partially reconstructed from citations.¹⁰ Mythology, of course, has its value in recording the ideas, the fears, the imaginations, the superstitions, and the theology of a people. That the age after the apostles produced an abundance of tradition unworthy of the name of Jesus or his disciples is well borne out by a perusal of some of this literature.

As with the Old Testament Apocrypha and also some of the later canonical works, many second- and third-century Christian writings were issued under older and more venerable names. This was done in order to gain more respect for those books and to give them the appearance of antiquity. Fortunately, through the work of Jerome and others the spurious character of these works was recognized. Their false or questionable nature is here pointed out in order to differentiate them from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, which are certainly in another class.

Foremost among the New Testament Apocrypha are several gospels that have little to add to the content of the canonical gospels and that definitely are lacking in historical value. Of these the two most important are the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* and the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*. The *Gospel According to the Hebrews* was written about 125 A.D. and was popular among Jewish Christians in Egypt. Jerome had an Aramaic version of it, but its original form was probably Greek. No copy of it exists today; our only knowledge of it is from quotations by Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, and others. The author is

¹⁰ The standard work in this field is M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924).

obviously dependent upon the Gospel of Matthew, which he amplifies in places. In fact, the Aramaic recension of the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* has often been confused with the Aramaic original of Matthew.

It is highly probable that the *Oxyrhynchus Sayings of Jesus* are based on this gospel. Wherever there is additional or different material as compared with Matthew it borders on the grotesque, as is the case with all apocryphal literature. In the third century it is usually referred to as one of the questionable or false books, and by the fourth century it was virtually unknown.

The *Gospel According to the Egyptians* (ca. 130 A.D.) was used by gentile Christians in Egypt. Like its companion gospel, this was written in Greek and is preserved only through quotations by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, according to whom it was used by the Encratites, an ascetic sect in Egypt. Hippolytus and Epiphanius classified it as heresy.

The Gospel of Peter (ca. 130 A.D.) was written by an unknown author who hoped to gain more prestige for the book by the use of the apostle's name. It interprets the passion of Jesus from the standpoint of Docetism, a heresy that was attacked by the Fourth Gospel, the letters of John, and the Ignatian Epistles. A fragment of this gospel was discovered in Egypt in 1886, prior to which time our only knowledge of it came through patristic citation.

Gnosticism, another heresy of the second century, found expression in the *Gospel of Thomas*.¹¹ The author of this gospel retold the story of Jesus' childhood from the Gnostic point of view. Reading this gospel with its grotesque miracles that are attributed to the child Jesus, one can readily under-

¹¹ For Gnosticism, see p. 152.

stand why the word "apocrypha" came to be associated with the words "unworthy" and "spurious."

The apocryphal literature seems to be an amplification or extension of the chief literary forms of the canonical New Testament—the gospel, the letter, the acts, and the revelation. We have described briefly a few of the apocryphal gospels, all of which were imitations in the noncanonical literature of the second and third centuries.

In attempting to supply what purported to be information about individuals and movements mentioned in the canonical *Acts*, the later works took a fictional form and have provided not a little source material for twentieth-century novels. One of these apocryphal books is the *Acts of Paul* (ca. 160 A.D.), written, according to Tertullian, by a presbyter of Asia. Our chief evidence for the existence of this book is a mutilated Coptic manuscript of the sixth century and a recently discovered Greek papyrus from about 300 A.D. A section called "The Acts of Paul and Thecla" describes Paul's ministry at Iconium and his conversion of a Greek girl named Thecla, who becomes a strong Christian, is thrown to the lions, escapes, and subsequently becomes a teacher. Contrary to Paul's attitude in the New Testament, he here approves of women teaching and holding office. The story continues with incidents in Paul's later career at Myra, Perga, and Ephesus, where he is thrown to the lions, one of which was "let loose upon him, and it ran to him in the stadium, and lay down at his feet."

Following the *Acts of Paul*, another book appeared called the *Acts of John*, written by a Docetist about 160 A.D. The beginning of this book, dealing probably with the banishment of John to Patmos, is lost. The remainder, as found in a late Greek text (edited by Bonnet, 1898), tells of John's journey

to Rome to appear before Domitian, who had heard of his preaching in Ephesus. The whole story is inelegant, crude, and, at times, offensive.

As might be expected, the Acts literature would not be complete without a similar book on Peter. The *Acts of Peter* (ca. 210 A.D.), modeled after the *Acts of John*, has been recovered in Coptic, Greek, and Latin manuscripts. This fictional biography of the apostle is typical of all apocryphal books in its trivial and grotesque quality and is the source of many later traditions such as the famous "Domine, quo vadis?" scene and the crucifixion of Peter head downward.¹² Other works of this type are the *Acts of Andrew*, the *Acts of Thomas*, the *Acts of Philip*, and the *Acts of Pilate*.

From II Peter, which has rarely been held as authentic, to the apocryphal epistles is not much of a jump. Forged or imitative letters did not become as numerous or as popular as apocalypses, owing to the difficulty of writing such documents and the possibility of detection. Among the few extant apocryphal letters, the most well-known are the fragments of the *Letters of Christ and Abgarus*, the *Correspondence of Paul and Seneca*, the *Epistle of the Apostles*, and the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. Obviously the last-named work was written to supply the missing letter mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:16.

It remains for us to consider briefly the apocalypse as a final form of apocryphal literature. The most important book in this category is the *Apocalypse of Peter*, which was included in several canonical lists and early manuscripts. This second-century work was quoted frequently by third- and fourth-century writers and is preserved, in part, in Greek

¹² Thomas B. Costain in his *The Silver Chalice* uses the story of the contest in Rome between Simon Magus and Peter and the attempted flight of Magus over the city.

and Ethiopic versions. It is devoted largely to a vivid description of the torments of hell and is a possible source for Dante's *Inferno*.

Less popular among ancient authorities was the *Apocalypse of Paul*, which appeared in the fourth century. The apocalypses of Thomas and Stephen complete the list of those bearing the names of New Testament personages.

In addition to the patristic and apocryphal literature, the noncanonical literature might also include the early apologies. On the other hand, the works of the apologists were not identified so closely with scripture as were the other two classes of writing. This form of literature arose out of the natural demand for a polemic or theological defense of struggling Christianity.¹³ Ridiculed and condemned as treasonable and atheistic, the new religion had to find a quick defense or justification, the first of which was the *Preaching of Peter* (early second century), quoted by Clement of Alexandria and Origen. This was followed by the *Apology of Quadratus* (125 A.D.) and the *Apology of Aristides* (ca. 140 A.D.). Perhaps the best-known name among the apologists is that of Justin Martyr, who championed the cause of Christianity in Rome (150–165). His *First Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho* defended the Christian religion against Jewish as well as Roman critics.

¹³ "Apology," from the Greek *'απολογία* — a treatise written in defense of Christianity.

Part Four

The Transmission of the Bible

Chapter Ten

Greek Manuscripts

1. The Problem of Transmission

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press had two important results: it increased the circulation of any given book a thousandfold, and it established the accuracy of the original text of that book for all subsequent printings. Before the fifteenth century no two copies of a book were the same. All books were in manuscript form and contained the inevitable errors or intentional changes of copyists. Once the autographs or original work were lost, no one could be sure of the original text.

The first fact to bear in mind as we take up the long story of the transmission of the Bible down to the present day, therefore, is that no original autograph of the Bible or any part of it exists today. The books of the Bible as first written — the Old Testament books on skins, the New Testament on papyrus — disappeared not long after their composition. But they were copied, and our only knowledge of their content comes from the study of manuscript copies or copies of copies. (This is also true of all Greek and Roman classics.)

The loss of the original books of the Bible has led to a science called Textual or Lower Criticism, which is a comparative study of manuscripts and versions with a view to approximating the probable content of the original documents. Owing to the errors of scribes in copying, to variant readings,

and to corruptions in the texts of manuscripts, scholars can never be sure they have arrived at the original words of any part of the Bible, but the task continues to challenge them. We can appreciate the liability to error on the part of ancient copyists when we consider how difficult it is for us today to copy accurately a long — or even a short — document. In many instances the copyist was unable to read the handwriting of the previous scribe; in others, he misunderstood the abbreviations and peculiarities of writing. The task of the textual critic, therefore, is highly technical. He must be well trained in several ancient languages and familiar with all the peculiarities of manuscripts in their respective periods: size, number of columns, variety of contractions, and types of handwriting.

The original New Testament was probably written on papyrus with a reed pen and ink. Papyrus, found in great abundance in Egypt, was used for stationery as early as 3000 B.C. The inner bark was cut in strips, which were laid side by side. Other strips were placed on top of these at right angles, and the two layers were then pressed together, dried, and polished. Sheets were cut in various lengths from six to sixteen inches; where a single document required several pieces, they were glued together end to end in a scroll.

The writing originally followed the direction of the fiber strips; scrolls, therefore, were inscribed on the side on which the fibers were horizontal. The columns were narrow and there was no separation of words. The writer used no punctuation. In some instances the writer indicated a change in the content by a short horizontal line drawn in the margin — the origin of the English word “paragraph.”¹

The title of the book appeared at the end, and the whole

¹ *παράγραφω*, to write alongside of.

document was rolled up and put in a cylinder. The original Four Gospels and the Pauline letters were probably kept in such cylinders.

Papyrus gave way to vellum during the fourth and fifth centuries. This change was caused partly by the decrease in the amount of papyrus available but more especially by the greater practicability of vellum. Vellum, in the form of sheets, could be used on both sides; it was more durable and could be bound into books.

Down to the sixth century the scribes were a professional class, but from the sixth century on, manuscripts were produced and copied in monasteries by the monks. Most of the earlier manuscripts (from the fourth to the eighth century) were written in large, square, capital letters; these manuscripts are called *uncials*. Later manuscripts (generally after the eighth century) were written in a cursive or script style and are called *minuscules*. Some of the earliest manuscripts had four columns to the page, but as time went on the tendency was to reduce the number of columns, so that by the seventh or eighth century most of the manuscripts were done in one column. The words were still not separated, with the result that the modern scholar has the added task of dividing the letters correctly. In some cases this involves uncertainty, though usually it is not too difficult.

2. *Uncial Manuscripts*

Because the papyrus scrolls no longer exist, it is with the vellum manuscripts that we must begin our story of the transmission of the Bible. There are in existence some 2,500 manuscripts of the Bible, varying in length from the complete Bible

or New Testament down to a few verses, a chapter, or a portion of one book.

Some recently discovered fragments of the New Testament actually antedate the great manuscripts. These are the Oxyrhynchus Papyri (third century), containing lost sayings of Jesus as well as material from the canonical gospels and the book of Hebrews. An earlier find was the Beatty Papyri,² consisting of twelve fragments, some of which are from the third century and contain parts of the gospels, Pauline letters, and part of the Apocalypse of John. A noteworthy fact about the Beatty Papyri is that they were in the form of three codices or books rather than rolls. One of these codices, according to some scholars, dates from the middle of the second century A.D. Originally the Beatty codices probably contained all the undisputed books of the New Testament (the Four Gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul, and Revelation). These documents, which have been edited and published, are bound to have a bearing on the study of the early text of the New Testament.

The main task of the textual critic is to reconstruct as far as possible the correct text of the Bible. The Greek manuscripts are his first source for that task, the other two sources being the ancient versions and patristic citations.

The two oldest and most valuable Greek manuscripts are known as *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*. *Codex Vaticanus* or *B* is an uncial Greek manuscript of the early fourth century. It is written on fine vellum and contains 759 leaves with three columns to the page. This manuscript has been in the Vatican Library at least as early as 1481, when a catalogue of manuscripts was made. It probably contained all of the Old Testament at one time, with the exception of the books of Mac-

² Discovered by A. Chester Beatty in Egypt in 1931.

cabees. (In its present state it lacks Hebrews from 9:14 to the end, the Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, and the Apocalypse of John.) While its existence was long known, it was not until the nineteenth century that it was photographed and studied by textual critics. The paleographical evidence points to Egypt as the place of writing.

Second only to *B* in value and importance is *Codex Sinaiticus* or *Aleph*, which is written on vellum in uncial letters and contains 347 leaves with four columns to the page. It was discovered in 1859 by Count Tischendorf in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. The manuscript was later purchased from the monastery by the Czar and kept in St. Petersburg until the accession of the Soviet rule, when it was purchased by the Parliament and people of Great Britain at a cost of half a million dollars. It is now in the British Museum.

Aleph contains the complete Bible including the Apocalypse of John, Epistle of Barnabas, and a part of the Shepherd of Hermas. According to some authorities, it may once have contained the Didaché. It is thought that *Aleph* and *B* were two of the fifty Bibles that Constantine ordered Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, to have prepared for the Byzantine churches. Both are closely related textually and bear the earmarks of the same scribal school in Egypt. By the seventh century *Aleph* was in Caesarea and had undergone many corrections and editings.

Next in antiquity and importance is the uncial known as *A* or *Codex Alexandrinus*. It derives its name from the fact that it was in the library of Alexandria until 1621, at which time it was given to James I of England by the Patriarch of Alexandria. Its previous history places it in the Patriarchal Library of Cairo and before that at Mount Athos in Greece.

It is now in the British Museum. This codex is a fifth-century document and probably originated in Byzantium rather than Egypt. In addition to the books of the New Testament, it includes the letters of Clement, but it lacks parts of Matthew, the Fourth Gospel, and II Corinthians.

Codex Ephraemi Syri or *C* has an interesting history. It was written originally in the fifth century and contained the entire Bible in Greek. In the twelfth century, vellum having become somewhat scarce, some scribe partially rubbed out the original Greek and on top of it and between the lines transcribed in Syriac thirty-eight homilies of Ephraem, a Syrian Father of the fourth century. Such a manuscript is known as a palimpsest.³ It is possible to read the fifth-century Greek fairly well in spite of the superimposition of the twelfth-century Syriac. Tischendorf edited the manuscript in 1843 and found that many leaves were missing. It is now in Paris.

Still another type of manuscript is the bilingual, the most celebrated example of which is *Codex D* or *Bezae*, which was written in Greek and Latin on the left and right sides, respectively. This manuscript has usually been assigned to the sixth century, but recent opinion places it in the fifth. It probably originated in France, where the people spoke Latin; hence, the need for a Latin "crib" of the Greek original. However, critical examination shows many discrepancies between the Latin and the Greek; it is obvious that the Latin side is not a direct translation of the Greek but has a separate origin. The Greek text is decidedly corrupt and shows signs of extensive editing by later scribes, who inserted marginal notes in the text itself and interpolated theological expansions. One theory holds that the Latin is a translation of a Greek manuscript from which the Greek of *D* was originally taken and that the

³ πάλιν, again; ψῆν, to rub.

translator was familiar with current Latin versions. The Greek, in fact, has been corrected to conform to the Latin in many places.⁴

The manuscript was named for Theodore Beza, the Protestant reformer at Geneva, who obtained it from the Monastery of Saint Irenaeus at Lyons in 1562 and in 1581 gave it to the University of Cambridge. Its early history is associated with Lyons. *Codex Bezae* has only one column to the page. The gospels and Acts are not complete. The agreement, on the whole, between the earlier manuscripts *Aleph* and *B* as contrasted with *D* made possible a much more reliable text for the Revised Version of 1881-85 and further revisions that followed. It is generally agreed that the Western text, of which *D* is the representative, is less trustworthy than the Egyptian text of *Aleph* and *B*.

These five manuscripts are by far the most important and stand in a class by themselves. A few others, however, are taken into account in establishing the text:

D2 or *D Paul* or *Codex Claromontanus*, a Graeco-Latin uncial of the sixth century, is called *Claromontanus* because it was once at Clermont in Beauvais. This manuscript, now in Paris, is an important authority in the reconstruction of the text of the Pauline letters.

Codex E is a bilingual manuscript of the sixth century and contains only the Book of Acts. Its history starts with Sardinia and jumps to Northumbria, where it was used by Bede in the eighth century; it was later taken by Boniface to Würzburg, Bavaria, and finally in the seventeenth century fell into the possession of Archbishop Laud, who gave it to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

⁴ See F. C. Burkitt in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1901-02, III, 501-13.

H, once a complete sixth-century manuscript of the Paulines, now contains only a few leaves, which are divided among six European cities. They have value as a probable copy of an early recension of Pauline Epistles.

L, or *Codex Regius*, is an eighth-century Greek manuscript of the gospels, containing, incidentally, both endings of Mark.

The manuscripts designated *N*, *O*, Σ , and Φ are referred to as the Constantinople group because they have a common origin in that city, as the text and workmanship indicate. They are from the sixth century and contain only the gospels. The vellum in all four documents is stained purple, and the letters are in gold and silver.

In 1906 a manuscript was bought in Egypt by C. L. Freer of Detroit. This fifth-century uncial is called the *Washington Codex* or *W* and is noteworthy in that it gives the gospels in the so-called Western sequence — Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark — and also because of a peculiar interpolation within the longer ending of Mark, a textual oddity appearing in no other extant manuscript. This manuscript is now in the Freer Art Gallery in Washington, D.C.

3. *Minuscules*

Less important for textual study are the minuscules, which are valuable only as they support earlier uncial manuscripts. The minuscules, or cursive group, are indicated by numbers. They range from the ninth to the fifteenth century.

In the *B* and *Aleph* tradition is 33, a minuscule of the ninth or tenth century, containing the entire New Testament except Revelation. Most prominent among the minuscules is the "Ferrar Group," consisting of 13, 69, 124, 230, 346, 543, 788,

826, 828, 983, 1,689, and 1,709. Most of these manuscripts are from the eleventh century and are famous for their placement of the *pericope adulterai* — the passage about the woman taken in adultery — after Luke 21:38 instead of John 7:53.

The best example of the colored minuscule is 2,400, known as the Rockefeller-McCormick New Testament, a thirteenth-century Byzantine masterpiece. Edgar J. Goodspeed ran across this manuscript in an antiquarian shop in Paris in 1927. Even more noteworthy than the text, which is comparatively late (thirteenth century), are the 74 miniatures or colored illustrations that were found in this manuscript.

Another type of manuscript is that called the lectionary. The lectionaries are not continuous texts, but editions of the gospels or Acts made especially for reading in the public services of worship. They are so edited as to provide systematic readings through the church or calendar year. The lectionaries are difficult to place but probably do not antedate the eighth century.

4. Hebrew Manuscripts

Until the discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls, our oldest Hebrew manuscripts went back no earlier than the ninth century A.D. Not only did the Hebrew manuscripts, like the Greek uncials, have no word separation; they also had no vowels, which made reading still more difficult. The Hebrew text was standardized in the seventh century A.D. by the Masoretes. To preserve the text in its traditional form,⁵ they simply copied it repeatedly for hundreds of years, introducing

⁵ See James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York, 1919), IV, 729 ff.; W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (New York, 1912), pp. 69–83; and R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), pp. 71 ff.

no changes. Their text is the standard Hebrew Bible today.

The first extant manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament⁶ comes almost one thousand years after the Hebrew Scripture was canonized. In view of the length of the Old Testament as compared with the New Testament and also the longer time of transmission by hand, we might expect more variations and changes, but such is not the case. The reverence of the Hebrew scribes for the word of God made them meticulously careful in transcribing the text. Since the text was sacred, they copied even the obvious errors and inserted the correct words in the margin. Word division was introduced in the text about 500 A.D., and the consonantal and vocalic text reached its permanent form by the tenth century through the Masoretic school of Tiberias.

The oldest manuscript is the tenth-century *St. Petersburg Codex*, now in Leningrad. It contains the Prophets and consists of 225 folios, each arranged in two columns of 21 lines. The chief peculiarity of this manuscript is that the vowels are written above the text instead of below. The supralinear arrangement of vowel writing is known as the Babylonian system and is practically nonexistent outside of this codex.

The uniformity of the Hebrew text is explained by the fact that very early in the transmission (probably soon after the canonization in 90 A.D.) all Hebrew manuscripts were made to conform to one model, and variant texts were destroyed. This standardized form was called the *Sopherim* text, and it was faithfully copied as sacred. Further, when the vowel system was added in the seventh century, an even greater degree of stabilization was assured. In the period be-

⁶ There are some 1,700 fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts but very few containing the entire Old Testament. For a discussion of Hebrew manuscripts, see C. D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Masoretic-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London, 1897), pp. 469 ff.

tween the adoption of the standardized text and the time of the earliest known manuscripts (tenth century), the scribes made extensive marginal notes, dealing with peculiar words, spelling, pronunciation, mechanical notes, and errors. This marginal commentary is known as the Masorah.⁷

The first printed editions of the Hebrew Bible appeared at Soncino (1488), Naples (1491-93), Brescia (1494), and Pesaro (1511-17), but the most important was the Rabbinic Bible published by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-25 and edited by Jacob ben Chayyim. This edition, embracing the Masorah, became and remains the standard Hebrew Bible of the present day.

⁷ For an extended description of the Masorah see the article by Arthur Jeffrey in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1952), I, 46-62.

Chapter Eleven

Early Versions

1. Latin Versions

As long as Christianity was confined to purely Greek-speaking localities, there was no need for the New Testament to be in any other tongue; but, with the increasing prominence of the Western or Latin church, centered in Rome, and with the rapid spread of the Christian religion in the far-flung provinces of the Graeco-Roman world, it became necessary to translate both the Old and New Testaments into Latin and other tongues. For a long time the educated class, even in Rome, used Greek, and the careless and crude form of the earliest Latin versions shows quite clearly that they were intended only for the uneducated. However, Latin was the official language of Carthaginian and African Christianity, so the Latin text of the Scripture was known there as early as 150 A.D.

In time, Greek became less of an international language, and, as Christianity penetrated into the hinterlands of Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Syria, Gaul, Armenia, and North Africa, the necessity arose for versions in the languages of those places. Some of these versions were written before our best extant manuscripts; consequently, while they have the obvious defects of translation, their antiquity gives them great value in our attempt to approximate the original text. On the other hand, since many of them were secondary versions (translations of translations), their contribution to textual study is considerably diminished. If an Arabic version were

made from an earlier Coptic, the Coptic in turn being a translation of the Greek, the Arabic is twice removed from the autograph copy and therefore is less trustworthy. This is why the Vulgate itself is less reliable, Jerome having based his translation in Latin upon several previous Latin manuscripts and the Septuagint.

The first version of importance for our study is the Old Latin, of which there were many African recensions. One might have expected Latin versions to appear first in Italy, but such was not the case. As late as the third and early fourth centuries, Greek was still the dominant language in Italy. The Christians in Rome wrote and spoke Greek, as did Roman officials and writers. But Latin was the official language of Carthage and northern Africa. Cyprian, writing in Carthage in the latter part of the second century, quotes extensively from a Latin Bible, which shows signs of being a translation of an earlier version; this points to a succession of Latin versions going back probably to 150 A.D. Bishop Nemesianus, for instance, when he attended the Council of Carthage in 256 A.D., used a Latin version that differed from Cyprian's Bible.

It is therefore safe to say that Tertullian (160–230 A.D.), the founder of Latin or African Christianity, was in possession of a Latin text. The gospel manuscripts known as *k* and *e*, from the fourth and fifth centuries respectively, came from Africa and contained the text used by Cyprian. The Fleury Palimpsest, *b*, is also an African text and contains the Book of Acts, fragments of the Catholic Epistles, and parts of Revelation.

Some manuscripts have been called the "European Latin" group to distinguish them from the "African Latin"; the relationship between the two has never been clarified.

The most valuable Latin manuscript of the European group is *Codex Vercellensis*, which is supposed to have been written by the bishop of Vercelli, Italy, about 365 A.D. It is written in narrow columns in silver on purple vellum and contains only the gospels. There are several fifth- and sixth-century European manuscripts that are more or less connected with the Western text.

It was Jerome (340-420 A.D.) who revised the earlier Latin recensions and brought out an official translation that would supersede all previous versions. With so many Latin versions in existence, all of which were different and contained mistakes of copyists, the need for revision became obvious. Jerome, whom Pope Damasus commissioned to do this important work, was well trained in Hebrew and Greek and can be considered one of the ablest scholars of his day. After serving as presbyter of Antioch, he was made secretary to Pope Damasus. He commenced his revision in 383 A.D. and continued the work in Bethlehem, where he lived for some twenty-five years. The result was the Vulgate (from the Latin, meaning "currently received" or "common"), which ultimately took its place as the accepted text and the authoritative Bible of the Roman church, although the Latin text of Jerome was actually not designated Vulgate until the Council of Trent (1546).

The Vulgate is not a translation from Greek originals but is chiefly a revision of an existing Latin text of the New Testament with occasional corrections based on Greek manuscripts. The particular Latin text used by Jerome is hard to determine, but ninety per cent of the Vulgate coincides with *Codex Brixianus* (f). Otherwise, his corrections of the Latin text, at least for the gospels, seem to be based on readings akin to those of the Egyptian school of manuscripts. He changed

the order of the gospels from that of the Old Latin to that of the great uncials. The rest of the New Testament shows very little alteration, as Jerome was fearful of the opposition to any changes he might introduce. He seems to have used different texts for different sections of the New Testament.

Jerome worked fourteen years on the Old Testament, translating from Hebrew into Latin. He commenced his Old Testament work by revising the Old Latin Psalter, which was, like all the rest of the Old Latin versions, a translation from the Septuagint. But he soon saw that he could get better results by going back to the Hebrew text.

Jerome's revision was not universally accepted. On the contrary, while it had official sanction, it was opposed by many bishops and some later popes and by conservative people everywhere, just as all subsequent versions were opposed. During the reign of Pope Gregory in the sixth century, both the Old Latin and the Vulgate of Jerome were used in Rome. Augustine used the Vulgate for the gospels and the Old Latin for the rest of the New Testament. The Vulgate, in fact, did not attain supremacy until the ninth century and did not become the standard Bible of the Roman Catholic Church until it was so declared by the Council of Trent.

This indiscriminate use of the Old Latin versions and the Vulgate manuscripts caused no end of textual trouble, as the various texts were mixed in usage. The Vulgate text was purified somewhat by Alcuin, abbot of St. Martin of Tours, in 801, but a better job of correction was done at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century. The division of the Bible into chapters was made by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, in 1228. The first complete book to come from the printing press of Gutenberg in 1455 was the Vulgate. In 1528 Stephanus published a critical edition, which

was revised a decade later. The first official edition was based on the University of Paris text and was revised by Pope Sixtus V, who published it in 1590.¹

2. *Syriac Versions*

Antioch in Syria was the earliest gentile-Christian center and the point from which Paul and his assistants worked in their missions. When Christianity penetrated the outlying districts of Syria (or Assyria), the need arose for Syriac translations of the New Testament. Syriac is closely related to the Aramaic that Jesus spoke. Added interest is therefore attached to the gospels in Syriac because the reader of these versions is dealing with practically the same vocabulary used by Jesus.

The first Syriac version, the Diatessaron of Tatian, made its appearance about 170 A.D. Confronting the fact that the Synoptics contained many doublets and triplets (material found two and three times in exactly the same wording), Tatian conceived the idea of combining the Four Gospels into one continuous narrative, eliminating duplications. His Diatessaron was based on a Greek text that was current in the middle of the second century. The resulting work was then translated into Syriac.

The Diatessaron remained the standard version of Edessa and the Assyrian Christians until the early part of the fifth century and was quoted by all Syriac Fathers up to that time. The text is a mixture of the Western and Neutral (or Egyptian), schools but is closer, perhaps, to the European Old

¹ The identification and collation of Vulgate manuscripts is a difficult task and is a field too technical to summarize here.

Latin and Bezae tradition than to the Egyptian. It is preserved in two Arabic manuscripts, which are in the Vatican.

The Assyrian church had a "Gospel of the Separated Ones" or separate gospels, of which we have two manuscripts, the Curetonian and the Sinaitic. This version, known as the Old Syriac, appeared about 200 A.D. The Sinaitic manuscript (fourth century) was discovered in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in 1892. It is palimpsest and has been photographed repeatedly and treated with a reagent in order to make its text more readable. The Curetonian manuscript (fifth century) was discovered in 1842 in a monastery near Cairo. A comparative study of these two manuscripts of the Old Syriac helps greatly in the study of the Syriac text. The Sinaitic, for instance, follows the Neutral manuscripts, *Aleph* and *B*, in ending Mark at 9:8, whereas the Curetonian contains the longer ending.

The most important Syriac version is the Peshitta ("simple," "Vulgate"), which shows a great affinity to the Byzantine or ecclesiastical text. Its appearance was occasioned by the same set of circumstances that brought about Jerome's Vulgate: Bishop Rabbula of Edessa ordered a revision of the Old Syriac in line with the best current Greek manuscripts. It appeared in 435 A.D. and became standard for the Assyrian church.

The Peshitta was later expanded to include the rest of the New Testament with the exception of II and III John, II Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse of John; these were included in a further revision by Polycarp of Heirapolis in 508. A further revision was made by Thomas of Harkel in 616; this is called the Harklean Version. These revisions made for a more literal rendering of the Syriac text to conform to the Greek manuscripts.

The Peshitta is now preserved in 243 manuscripts. An independent version called the Jerusalem or Palestinian version was made in the sixth century. The Peshitta Old Testament was made originally from the Hebrew, but the manuscripts differ in the number and order of books.

3. *Egyptian Versions*

In no province of the Roman Empire was the Greek language more firmly established than in Alexandria, home of the Septuagint, the Christian school of theology, and the best Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. But, in Egypt, as in other countries, when Christianity had moved into more remote districts and was found among the common people, versions in native dialects became necessary.

The Sahidic version of Upper Egypt, where Greek was not so prevalent, was probably the earliest to appear. This third-century version, otherwise known as the Thebaic, has been recovered from numerous fragments of papyri and parchment. Its text is closely akin to the Neutral school of *Aleph* and *B* in most readings, while in others it follows the Western text.

The Bohairic version, sometimes called the Coptic or Memphitic, arose in the Delta region and became the official text of the Coptic church. This version contains the entire New Testament and was probably written after the Sahidic. It has less Western influence than the Sahidic and is consistently Neutral in character.

The Latin, Syriac, and Egyptian versions are the primary ones, and we need not be concerned with secondary and later versions except to mention their names. They are the Gothic,

which is a translation of both the Old and New Testaments by Bishop Ufilas (fourth century), the Armenian, the Ethiopic (Abyssinian), the Georgian, and the Arabic. These were formerly held to be of little value in Textual Criticism, but some contemporary scholars have more respect for them, particularly the Georgian and the Armenian versions.

4. Old Testament Versions

We have been considering versions related to both Old and New Testaments, but here we are concerned with Old Testament versions only. In the case of the Old Testament some of the manuscripts of versions are older than the extant Hebrew manuscripts, but it is difficult to get back to their original form because of emendations, corruptions, and changes occurring in the process of translation.

The Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan revolt occurred shortly after the canonization of the Torah (444-432 B.C.). The Samaritans took with them to Shechem a copy of the Torah, which became known as the Samaritan Pentateuch. This remained their sole Bible. It is really an edition of the Hebrew text in the old Samaritan characters, and, although it was carefully preserved by the scribes, it contains many variants from both the Hebrew and Septuagint texts. Some of these changes were deliberate, others accidental. The Samaritan claims regarding their temple at Shechem gave rise to numerous changes in the text. "Gerezim," for instance, was substituted for "Ebal" in Deuteronomy 27:4. But, in spite of orthographic variants, dogmatic changes, interpolations,

grammatical corrections of the Hebrew, and accidental scribal errors, the Samaritan Pentateuch in many respects represents a more reliable text than the Masoretic Old Testament, particularly when it agrees with the Septuagint in varying from the Hebrew.

The Targums

The Targums also are an aid in determining the Hebrew text. Toward the beginning of the Christian Era, Aramaic had become the popular language in Palestine. Since the Scripture continued to be read in Hebrew every Sabbath, the need arose for some translation or paraphrase for the congregation.² Originally these interpretations were made orally with the reading of the Hebrew Scripture, but eventually they were put into written forms and called Aramaic Targums. The seven extant Targums are from the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., but proof exists that the Targums were in written form before 200 A.D. They are textually valuable because they represent a paraphrasing of Hebrew text older than any we have in our best Hebrew manuscripts. The most important Targum is the Babylonian of Onkelos, a free translation of the Pentateuch.

The Septuagint

The Septuagint (285–130 B.C.) represents the first real translation of any part of the Bible.³ The work of the translators varies considerably in quality, partly because many different men worked on it in the period of seventy-five or more years, and partly because the Pentateuch, being much more highly regarded, was therefore more carefully translated.

² Aramisms even appear in the Hebrew text of Ezra and Daniel.

³ See pp. 125–127 ff. for the origin of the Septuagint.

One of the books of the Prophets, Daniel, was so carelessly translated that it was later supplanted by Theodotian's version in all copies of the Septuagint. The textual differences between the Hebrew Old Testament and the Septuagint are numerous, and the order of the books is different. No satisfactory reason for these differences is at hand except the partial explanation that the Septuagint translators were rather free in their handling of the Hebrew text, making additions and omissions in the text and even adding books to the Hebrew list.

A third-century papyrus fragment of the Septuagint was found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1903. There are some thirty uncial manuscripts, the most important of which is *Codex Marchalianus*, a sixth-century uncial that contains only the Prophets. In addition to the uncials there are about three hundred cursives.

The popularity of the Septuagint throughout the Christian world in the first two centuries prejudiced the Jews against it, especially because of its inclusion of the Apocrypha. The Greek-speaking Jews wanted to keep their Old Testament intact and were aware of the many differences between the Hebrew and the Septuagint text. As a result there appeared several Greek Bibles for Jewish use, the first of which was that of Aquila. Aquila was a proselyte Jew from Pontus, Asia Minor, and, according to Jerome, a pupil of Rabbi Akiba. The chief characteristic of his version, which appeared about 170 A.D., is its literal quality. In order to achieve an accurate translation, Aquila tried to reproduce literally every word of the Hebrew text regardless of the form and idiom of the language he was using. This resulted in a stilted, wooden text, but it became the authoritative Greek version for Judaism.

The rapidly increasing Christian resentment to Aquila's

version was represented by Theodotion, an Ebionite Christian of Pontus (or Ephesus), whose version was produced about 190 A.D. Aquila's version had been a reaction to the Christian Septuagint; Theodotion's translation was a reaction to that of Aquila. Presumably a translation from the Hebrew Old Testament as a corrective of the Septuagint, it was in reality a revision of the Septuagint, which it improved noticeably. It exhibits a more facile, idiomatic Greek style than Aquila's version, so much so that parts of it were used to replace sections of the original Septuagint.

The third Greek version of the Old Greek Testament was that of Symmachus, another Ebionite Christian (*ca.* 200 A.D.). This translation is noted for its faithfulness to the Hebrew text and for its highly literary form. It was praised by Jerome for its clarity.

At this point we encounter the figure of Origen, the founder of Textual Criticism and the greatest biblical scholar of the first three centuries. Confronted with the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, and the three Greek versions, he decided to make a parallel study of all these in order to arrive at the most satisfactory Greek text of the Old Testament. This stupendous work is called the Hexapla, in which he arranged in parallel columns the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Hebrew text in Greek letters, the Greek translation of Aquila, the version of Symmachus, and Theodotion's translation. His own text of the Septuagint occupied the sixth column, which also contained his critical notes and emendations. Origen's Hexapla, which consumed twenty-eight years of his life, would, according to Nestle, fill 12,000 pages of manuscript, if complete, but it survives only in fragmentary quotations, copies, and palimpsests. The original manuscript, consulted by Jerome, was seen in the library at Caesarea in the seventh century.

Following Origen and largely influenced by his work, there were three Greek versions of the Old Testament, which aid greatly in determining the best readings of both the Septuagint and the Hebrew text. They were the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, Lucian of Samosata, and Hesychius in Egypt.

Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Georgian versions of the Old Testament made their appearance just as in the case of the New Testament.⁴ All these versions except the Peshitta Syriac were translations of the Septuagint. Nothing else need be noted about these other than what has been said in connection with the New Testament.

5. *Patristic Citations*

Another important source of textual evidence is found in the quotations of the Scripture by early church fathers. The second century produced an astonishing amount of extracanonical Christian literature, which, in view of the fact that it antedates our oldest manuscripts, is highly valuable in the reconstruction of the text of the Bible. A considerable portion of the New Testament could be restored, roughly at least, from these quotations, which were made from earlier manuscripts now lost.⁵

The chief Greek writers who quoted extensively from the Old and New Testaments were Marcion, Tatian, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Pamphilius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianus, Gregory of Nyssa, Epiphanius, and Chrysostom. The Latin writers were Tertul-

⁴ See pp. 228-235.

⁵ See pp. 188-192 ff. for patristic citations of the canon.

lian, Cyprian, Novatian, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Pelagius, and Cassiodorus. Syriac writings include *The Acts of Judas Thomas*, *Aphraates*, and *Ephraem*. In these quotations we find a mixture of the Western and Neutral texts. The chief value of these witnesses for the text is that in most instances they dated and located the manuscripts being used. The chief defect is that they were not too careful or precise in their quotation of the passages.⁶

6. *The Problem of the Text*

We have thus far surveyed the materials with which the search for the best text is conducted; namely, manuscripts, early versions, and patristic citations. The problem facing the textual critic is to get as close as possible to what may be considered the original text, which has been completely lost. This problem is complicated by the presence of countless variant readings (differences in the text of certain words or passages). Some of these variants were intentionally created by scribes in various ways: changing a manuscript to bring it in line with another, correcting what they regarded as errors of heresy, and carrying marginal explanatory notes of previous scribes over into the text itself.

There were also unconscious variants resulting from human fallibility. The copyist often omitted a line or a passage by mistake. If two lines began with the same word, the scribe might easily skip a line. If two lines ended with the same

⁶ For further discussion on patristic writers see C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (New York, 1927), pp. 419 ff.; A. Souter, *Text and Canon of the New Testament* (New York, 1910), pp. 76 ff.; and F. G. Kenyon, *Handbook to Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York, 1912).

word, he might easily repeat a line. Errors of spelling, hearing, and memory and errors due to misreading of Greek words by the copyist are numerous.

Changes were also made by editors of manuscripts for purposes of harmonization or smoothness. Finally, translators, from the earliest versions to modern English, have introduced many variations of text.⁷

In the face of these variant readings, the task of the editor from the second century on has been to standardize the text by collating and weighing the worth of the various manuscripts. To follow all the maneuvers that might be made in this battle for the text would take us far afield; let us look instead at the basic tactics most commonly followed today.

It became necessary to get back of the *Textus Receptus* — or Byzantine text, as it was called — to something closer to the first century. This was attempted by Griesbach in the mid-eighteenth century, by Lachmann in the mid-nineteenth century, and by Tischendorf, Nestle, and Westcott and Hort in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Coincidentally with the publication of the Revised Version in 1881–85, Westcott and Hort produced their critical edition of the Greek New Testament. This was the culmination not only of thirty years of research on their part but of centuries of scholarly labor.

In dealing with the corruptions of the text, these scholars evolved two tests for probability of textual purity: the intrinsic and the transcriptional. The intrinsic text tries to solve the problem of variants by deciding which reading

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the principles of Textual Criticism as applied to variants, see the article by Ernest C. Colwell in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1952), I, 72 ff.; also, his books, *The Study of the Bible* (Chicago, 1937), and *What Is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago, 1952).

makes more sense or best coincides with the context. In transcriptional probability, where two readings are involved, the decision is made in favor of that reading which seems to have produced the other.

These two methods obviously are not adequate for all situations, nor are they foolproof, as Westcott and Hort well recognized. They therefore went on to adopt the genealogical method, which places the emphasis on the comparative worth of manuscripts. Now, to choose a reading because it is supported by the greatest number of manuscripts is unreliable because a poor manuscript may have had many followers, while a superior manuscript may have been copied by very few. It is also dangerous to assume that the earliest manuscript is always the best, although usually antiquity is a good criterion.

According to Westcott and Hort, the main families of manuscripts are (1) the Byzantine (Syrian), (2) the Western (as in *D*), (3) the Neutral (*Aleph*, *A*, *B*, 33, and the Coptic versions), and (4) the Alexandrian (akin to the Neutral). Genealogical tables were made of all manuscripts as they were related to these four lines. These were later condensed into two main streams: the Neutral and Western (the Alexandrian is close to the Neutral and the Syrian is too late to have high value). Briefly, the theory is this: on the assumption that the Neutral school of manuscripts is more trustworthy, a reading supported by these manuscripts as against *D* is to be accepted. *B* is the manuscript to follow except where there are manifest scribal errors.⁸

⁸ For canons of criticism see Kostantine von Tischendorf, *Critical Edition of The Greek New Testament* (8th ed., Leipzig, 1869-72); Henry Hammond, *Outlines of Textual Criticism Applied to the New Testament* (Oxford, 1902); Ira M. Price, *The Ancestry of the English Bible* (2nd rev. ed. by William A. Irwin and Allen P. Wik-

More recently the Westcott-Hort theory has been challenged. Von Soden introduced a new system of manuscript classification and nomenclature, but it proved to be decidedly unpopular. Then Rendel Harris sprang to the defense of the Western text but had little effect on followers of the Westcott-Hort theory. The discovery of the Koridethi gospels (Θ), the *Washington Codex* (*W*), and the Beatty Papyri⁹ has already had some effect on recent Textual Criticism. Streeter fashioned a system of local texts, introducing a new family called the Caesarean, made up of 13, 1, Θ , and *W*, but this innovation in no way altered the validity of the Westcott-Hort theory.¹⁰

We can conclude that no serious change in Textual Criticism has occurred in the last fifty years; but one or two convictions can be set down. It has become evident that there is no strictly "Neutral" text in the sense of being the original uncontaminated Greek text. All manuscripts have different strains in them, and all manuscripts have been edited. Even *Codex Vaticanus* may well have been edited and corrected. The Neutral group of *Aleph* and *B* is still regarded as the most reliable source in the search for the best text.

gren, New York, 1949); B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York, 1882); E. C. Colwell, *op. cit.*

⁹ See page 220.

¹⁰ B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (London, 1924).

Chapter Twelve

English Translations

1. Anglo-Saxon Versions

Our story of the transmission of the Bible reaches its climax with the English translations, which originated for much the same reasons as the Latin or the Syriac versions, although the English was much later in putting in its appearance. The delay was due to the exclusive position of Latin as the official and sacred language of the Western church. It was inconceivable in the eyes of the Roman church that the Bible should be read in any other tongue. The people in England spoke Anglo-Saxon, but the Latin Vulgate was the only Bible permitted. The only vernacular translations from the fifth to the fifteenth century in the West were made by dissenting groups and were promptly prohibited by the church.

By the time Christianity had taken root in England, the Roman Catholic Church had established its tradition of apostolic succession, its doctrine of the primacy of the Roman See, and its claim to infallible authority and could therefore proscribe any such attempts to translate the Scripture into the language of the people. The availability of the Bible in the popular tongue was regarded as inimical to the unity and authority of the church in its dissemination of scriptural truth. The attempt was made, nevertheless, by reformers such as Peter Waldo. What Waldo did in the language of the Pro-

vence, John Wycliffe did in English — and met with the same result.

But the story of the English Bible actually starts before Wycliffe's time. The desire to render the Bible into the language of the common people found expression in several Anglo-Saxon versions. These were merely paraphrases of the Vulgate. The first was that of Caedmon, an illiterate farmer in Northumbria, who sang some biblical passages that were translated for him in the rough language of the seventh century. The only extant parts of his work are found in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.

The Psalter of Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne (d. 709), was the first actual translation of any book of the Bible into English. The Psalms were conducive to metrical rendering and were the most popular part of the Bible in medieval England.

The first English version of the gospels was made by Bishop Egbert in the eighth century. The original copy is in the British Museum.

Bede, the most prominent scholar of eighth-century England, translated the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon. The story of his translation and his death comes down to us through Cuthbert, a student of Egypt. No trace of his translation exists today.

In the late ninth century, King Alfred translated the Ten Commandments, other sections of Exodus, and the Psalms.

Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, edited Jerome's version of the gospels in the late seventh century. The Lindisfarne Gospels, as they were called, came into the possession of Sir Robert Cotton, who gave this excellent Latin manuscript to the British Museum. An interlinear Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of the Lindisfarne Gospels was made by Aldred, a priest, in

950 A.D. (Anglo-Saxon interlinear translations or paraphrases of the Latin Bible were made to assist preachers in teaching the Bible to the common people. The practice bears an analogy to the Aramaic Targums of the Old Testament.)

An independent Anglo-Saxon translation of the gospels (without the Latin) was made in Wessex in the tenth century. This is known as the Wessex Gospels and is preserved in six manuscripts, one of which is in the British Museum.

Finally, Aelfric, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1006), made a free translation of several Old Testament books. There are two extant manuscripts, one in the British Museum, the other in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

2. *The Wycliffe Bible*

The first complete Bible in English was the work of John Wycliffe (1320-84), "flower of Oxford scholarship" and "morning star of the Reformation." Now for the first time in England the book that had been kept from the people became common knowledge. "The jewel of the clergy," as it was said, had become "the toy of the laity." Latin, the holy tongue, had given way to the harsh rough language of the peasant. (The complete absence of translations from Aelfric to Wycliffe, a period of some 350 years, is explained by the Norman influence throughout that period, which was naturally unfavorable to any attempt to convert the Scripture into English.)

Wycliffe's activity represents a pre-Reformation Protestantism. As a matter of fact, the revolt of Wycliffe and Huss was much more radical and thoroughgoing than that of Luther and Calvin. The same conditions existed: two extreme

social classes, with the princes of church and state living in luxury, while the peasants starved in their filth; vice, materialism, and corruption; ignorance among the clergy; bribery at the courts; domination of the country by Rome; and, worst of all, prohibition of free speech and of reading the Scripture.

The Wycliffite dissent took the form of Lollardy. The "Lollards" were itinerant preachers¹ who wandered over the country proclaiming a gospel of simplicity, purity, and freedom. Under Wycliffe's leadership they opposed the temporal power of the church and actually persuaded Edward III to discontinue tribute to the Pope. Wycliffe preached against the worship of relics, pilgrimages to shrines, the mendicancy of friars, indulgences, monasticism, and sacramentarianism in all its forms. But his chief concern was the availability of the Scripture. How could the people follow the authority of the Bible if it was a sealed book written in Latin?

Fired with the idea of getting the Scripture to the people, Wycliffe undertook the translation of the Bible from the Vulgate into English. Half of the Old Testament was the work of Nicholas de Hereford, a Lollard leader. Also assisting in the translation was John Purvey, who worked on the New Testament and in 1388 made a complete revision of Wycliffe's Bible. Just how much of the translation can be credited to Wycliffe himself has not been determined, but it is clear that without his supervision the work would not have been done.

The Wycliffe Bible was the first complete Bible in English; it included the Apocrypha. The New Testament appeared in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382. It must be borne in mind that this was merely a translation from the

¹ Compare the Beghards in Germany, the Vaudois in Switzerland, the Waldenses in France, the Patarnes in Italy, and the Bogomiles in Bulgaria.

Latin Vulgate. Wycliffe had no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew. This Bible became extremely popular and many handwritten copies were made; those which were done on illuminated vellum survive today. Some of the phraseology of the Wycliffe Bible worked its way permanently into the English language, and a few expressions survive in later translations. It is interesting to note that Wycliffe's New Testament, as revised by Purvey, contains Paul's letter to the Laodiceans, an apocryphal epistle.

Opposition was not long in coming. Within ten years Parliament banned the Wycliffe Bible, and in 1401 a law was passed confiscating and burning all copies of the English Bible. Many people were burned at the stake for reading it. The church had previously promulgated many laws prohibiting the publication and reading of any Bible in the vernacular; these pronouncements were strengthened by the Third Synod of Oxford in 1408 (Arundel's Constitutions), which forbade any person to translate any part of the Holy Scripture into English or to read the translation of Wycliffe or any other translation under penalty of "greater excommunication." In 1415 the Council of Constance had the bones of Wycliffe removed from their grave, and in 1428 they were dug up, burned, and thrown upon the River Swift. Purvey and Hereford were persecuted and thrown into prison.

Purvey's revision supplanted Wycliffe's edition as the popular Bible of the fifteenth century. In 1850 Forshall and Madden, after twenty-two years of intensive examination of the 170 manuscripts of the Wycliffe and Purvey Bibles, published both in parallel form. Prior to that time it was almost impossible to distinguish between them.

3. *William Tyndale*

The greatest name in the history of the English Bible is that of William Tyndale (1484-1536). His greatness lies in the fact that his is the first English translation to be made directly from the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament. Back of the Tyndale Bible and accounting for its appearance in 1525 lay many potent forces, all of which can be summarized in one word — the Renaissance.

Between the times of Wycliffe and Tyndale, Europe had experienced an intellectual rebirth in one of the most creative periods in the history of civilization. The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 resulted in an influx of Greek scholars into Europe, where Greek had become almost extinct. In 1450 Gutenberg invented the printing press, and four years later movable type was being used. The Renaissance unleashed new forces of creativity. Otherworldliness gave way to realism. Individualism replaced medieval quiescence. Blind belief was supplanted by intellectual curiosity. Then came art, discovery, invention, and new scholarship. The Copernican theory produced a new universe; the discoveries of Columbus, Magellan, and da Gama revealed a new geography; and Galileo paved the way for modern science.

In the world of religion, the Renaissance took the form of a revolt against a corrupt and authoritarian church, as the suppressed desires and stifled rebellions broke loose upon Europe in the Protestant Reformation. Private judgment and individual freedom were the watchwords. Scholars everywhere began to search out and study Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Greek grammars were published and Greek was placed in the curriculum of Oxford and the University of

Paris. Reuchlin issued a Hebrew grammar. The first printed Hebrew Bible appeared in 1488, and in 1516 Erasmus published the first Greek New Testament. The demand for the Bible again came to the fore, but this time that demand was for the Scripture in the original tongues. And now the printing press would guarantee a purer text, free from the multiplying errors of copyists.

All this lies back of Tyndale. Whereas Wycliffe had translated only from the Latin Vulgate, Tyndale could draw upon new and authoritative texts of the original tongues.

In spite of the new learning and religious revolt that had swept Europe, the Reformation had not as yet touched England. Henry was still "Defender of the Faith," and Sir Thomas More was strictly Catholic in his proposed reforms. The church was still opposed to the translation of the Bible into English and even more to Tyndale's Protestant ideas. It was therefore impossible for Tyndale to work under the patronage of the church. He appealed to Bishop Tunstall of London for approval but was spurned. In 1524, with the financial assistance of Humphrey Monmouth, a London merchant, he went to Hamburg, and within a year had finished the New Testament. The following year he appeared in Cologne with sheets for the printer.

The printing was suddenly stopped by church authorities who were told of the matter by an anti-Protestant informer named Cochlaeus. Tyndale fled to Worms, where the printing was completed. Some 6,000 copies were anonymously published and secretly shipped to England. The king and Cardinal Wolsey, however, had been warned by Cochlaeus of the possible shipment. Church authorities ordered the books burned at Paul's Cross in London. Only two copies of this edition survive today.

The much-publicized burning created a greater demand for the Bible and also greater financial support for Tyndale. This time help came from Augustine Packington, another London merchant. With this aid Tyndale revised his New Testament and printed another and larger edition. Now the tide could not be stemmed. Further revisions were made in 1534 and 1535.

Tyndale began work on the Old Testament in Marburg in 1527 and completed the Pentateuch by 1530. In May of that year it too was confiscated and burned in London. He completed his translation through Chronicles but was unable to complete the Old Testament before his death. After the split between Henry and the Pope, persecution became less severe, but agents of the opposition seized Tyndale in Antwerp and threw him into a dungeon in the Vilvorde prison. Here he languished for sixteen months and endured the mockery of a trial, in which Cromwell failed in his efforts to interfere on his behalf. Tyndale was put to death October 6, 1536, by being strangled and then burned at the stake. As he died, he said: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

In the work of translation Tyndale had before him the text of Erasmus' Greek New Testament, the Vulgate, and Luther's German translation. Compared with sources used later, these were inferior, but he did his work wonderfully well. The influence of Tyndale's translation is seen in the fact that eighty per cent of the Authorized Version retains his phrasology. He possessed not only a rare knowledge of Hebrew and Greek but also a prose style unparalleled in grace, felicity of expression, and vigor. It is not too much to say that Tyndale's translation was the making of the "King's English," the normative English usage, and, as incorporated in the King James Bible, remained such for three hundred

years. What Luther accomplished through his German Bible, Tyndale did in his English translation. These two men gave to the German and English languages their permanent form, their grace, simplicity, and dignity.

4. *The Coverdale Bible*

Between Tyndale and the Authorized Version of 1611, several Bibles appeared, all of which were revisions of Tyndale's translation. The most important was that of Myles Coverdale, who was responsible for the publication of the first complete English Bible (1535).² Coverdale had Protestant leanings, and, encouraged, perhaps, by the changing attitude toward the English translations on the part of Thomas Cromwell³ and Archbishop Latimer, he determined to supervise the publication of a complete Bible. Coverdale was more of an editor than a translator, but, as an editor, did much to improve the Tyndale Bible, adding many expressions that were more euphonious or rhythmical and also completing the Old Testament. For those books of the Old Testament not found in Tyndale's Bible, he used Luther's German Bible, the Vulgate, the Zurich Bible of Zwingli, and the Latin text of Pagninus. The Apocrypha were included, although not as canon.

The first edition, published in 1535, was dedicated to the king and therefore encountered little opposition. Whether

² Sometimes called the "Treacle Bible" from its rendering of Jeremiah 8:22: "Is there no treacle in Gilead?"

³ Thomas Cromwell, not to be confused with Oliver Cromwell, was King Henry's chief adviser and acted successively as Privy-Councillor, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State, Vicar-General, Lord Great Chamberlain, and supervisor of religious matters.

the 1535 edition was licensed by the king is uncertain, but his revision of 1537 had royal approval. Within one year of Tyndale's martyrdom, a Bible that was essentially his own was now published under the authority of the crown! Such is the irony of progress.

5. *Matthew's Bible*

The so-called Matthew's Bible was the work of John Rogers, who had been associated with Tyndale in Antwerp and who had acquired some of Tyndale's manuscripts. This Bible appeared in 1537 and was a slightly revised and completed edition of Tyndale's translation. Opposition to Tyndale was still strong, and publication under his name was out of the question. Perhaps for that reason, Rogers used the name Thomas Matthew as the editor. His Old Testament was Tyndale's from Genesis to Chronicles and Coverdale's for the remainder of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. The New Testament was Tyndale's revised edition.

Rogers dedicated Matthew's Bible to King Henry and Queen Anne. The title page and dedication are signed by Thomas Matthew, whereas the introductory statement ends with the initials J. R., which presumably stand for John Rogers. The presence of both names poses a problem as to the identity of Thomas Matthew. Was he a benefactor who provided the money for the publication? Was he an earlier associate of Tyndale? Or was the name merely used by John Rogers as a pen name? The situation is further complicated by the initials W. T. at the end of the Old Testament; this is all the more perplexing since the latter half of the Old Testa-

ment was the work of Coverdale. The problem is partly clarified by the expression used in Roger's death sentence: "John Rogers alias Matthew."

Matthew's, like Coverdale's 1537 edition, was a licensed Bible. This is surprising since the prologue, notes, and most of the translation were known to be Tyndale's work. Royal sanction can probably be attributed to Cranmer's recommendation to Cromwell in which he said that "so far as I have read thereof I like it better than any other translation heretofore made." Despite this royal approval, its use in churches was prohibited.

This Bible, essentially the work of Tyndale, became the basis for all later translations. Its editor, John Rogers, shared Tyndale's fate. When Mary came to the throne, he was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake.

6. *The Great Bible*

There were now two licensed English Bibles. Recognizing that both were in reality Tyndale's translation, Cromwell authorized Coverdale to prepare a revision of Matthew's Bible. In 1538 Coverdale, accompanied by Grafton, a London publisher, went to Paris, where the revision was begun, only to be confiscated and condemned. The publication was completed in London; upon its appearance in England it was supported by Cromwell and later received some episcopal support. It was called the Great Bible (1539) on account of its size.

The editors of the Great Bible made use of Münster's Latin Old Testament, the Vulgate, and the Complutensian Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes, but, in the final analysis, it was

essentially a revision of Matthew's Bible, which meant that it was still Tyndale's translation. Because Archbishop Cranmer wrote a preface to the second edition, it has been called Cranmer's Bible. Ironically, the fourth edition was issued under the auspices of Bishop Tunstall, archenemy and persecutor of Tyndale!

The Great Bible enjoys the distinction of being the first — indeed, the only — officially “authorized” English translation.⁴ Starting with the 1540 edition, the title page carried the injunction: “This is the Bible appointed to the use of the churches.” Copies were placed in the churches by order of the bishops; but the church was evidently not ready for private reading and individual interpretation of the Scripture, for a proclamation was issued prohibiting all private discussion of the Bible, especially in “taverns and alehouses.”

One improvement over previous Bibles was the elimination of marginal comments and sectarian introductions. Even Coverdale's attempts at marginal interpretations of “dark passages” were removed. On the title page appeared an elaborate woodcut showing King Henry VIII directing Cromwell and Cranmer to distribute copies of the Bible.

Henry's Protestantism was political rather than ideological. In the latter part of his reign he turned against the Protestant leaders and officially condemned every Bible except the Great Bible. Many Bibles were burned at this time and reading of the Scripture by the common people was prohibited. Cromwell was executed in 1540, and a general persecution of Protestants followed.

⁴ The so-called Authorized Version of 1611 was produced under the sponsorship of King James, who actually appointed the committee of translators, but, as far as the records show, it was never officially authorized by him or any other authority.

7. *The Taverner Bible*

An independent revision of Matthew's Bible was published in 1539, the same year in which the Great Bible appeared. This was by Richard Taverner, a London lawyer and friend of Cromwell. Shortly after Cromwell's death, Taverner was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Although a layman, he had an excellent knowledge of Greek and was well known for his literary achievements. His New Testament, therefore, was checked against the original sources, but his work in the Old Testament was confined to arbitrary improvements in the English. Several of his words and phrases, such as "parable" for "similitude," were contained in subsequent translations. Regardless of its merits, Taverner's Bible was eclipsed by the Great Bible and played a relatively minor role in the drama of the transmission of the Scripture.

8. *The Geneva Bible*

Under Edward VI, England became more distinctly Protestant, and the Great Bible came into wider use. But Edward was succeeded by Mary Tudor, who rescinded all the pro-Protestant laws of her predecessor and turned England back officially to Catholicism. Reading of the English Bible was punishable by death. Under Bloody Mary, as the queen was dubbed, hundreds of Protestants suffered martyrdom. Among those put to death were Cranmer and Latimer. Coverdale, made bishop of Exeter under Edward VI, found himself in grave danger and fled to the Continent.

Many nonconformist Protestant leaders and prominent scholars went to Geneva, where they found a more favorable atmosphere. It was here that the Geneva Bible was translated and printed. The New Testament (1557) was largely the work of William Whittingham, a brother-in-law of Calvin and pastor of the English church in Geneva. The Old Testament was done by Anthony Gilby and others and appeared in 1560 along with a revision of Whittingham's New Testament.

The Geneva Bible, like previous and subsequent translations, was just another revision, which means that Tyndale was the chief source for the text. This was true more particularly of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Great Bible (a revision of Tyndale) was the immediate basis, with some reference to the Hebrew. The Geneva Bible was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, who had meanwhile acceded to the throne and who was enjoined to "root out" popery and all forms of Catholicism. It was called the "Breeches Bible" from its rendering of Genesis 3:7 where Adam and Eve "sewed fig' leaves together and made themselves breeches."

The most original work done in this Bible was in connection with those sections of the Old Testament not translated by Tyndale. Here the Hebrew text was consulted with great profit. In the New Testament, the commentary of Beza was used along with Latin texts.

The improvements in scholarship in the Geneva Bible were somewhat offset by the pro-Calvinist marginal notes, which ultimately weakened its influence. For a long time, however, it was popular because of this Protestant slanting. Later translators operated with greater professional integrity and were careful to avoid all sectarian bias and subjective in-

terpretation. The work of the translator stops with the translation.

The Geneva Bible is famous for several innovations. It was the first to use Roman type. It was the first Bible to arrange the text in verses; that is, with each sentence printed as a separate unit. (This scheme was followed up to the Revised Version, which arranged the material in paragraphs according to subject matter.) It was the first English Bible to omit the Apocrypha. It was the first to use italics for all words not occurring in the original Hebrew or Greek text, but which needed to be added for sense or correct form. It was the first to omit the name of Paul in connection with the Book of Hebrews.

These features, along with the excellence of the translation itself and new mechanical features, helped to make it the family Bible of England and Scotland and the Bible of the early Puritans. It was the Bible used by Shakespeare and Bunyan. Its popularity is seen in the fact that at least eight editions appeared after the publication of the King James Version.

9. The Bishops' Bible

Elizabeth favored Protestantism for the same reasons that Constantine favored Christianity — political reasons. She reinstated the reading of the Scripture in the churches, and the Bible to be read was the Great Bible. However, the Geneva Bible was recognized as superior in scholarship and was certainly more popular, with the result that the Great Bible was unable to hold its own as the “official” Bible of England.

On the other hand, the Geneva Bible was partisan; it represented not the whole church but only the so-called liberal party.

Church authorities, therefore, decided to publish a Bible that would supplant both earlier versions and appointed Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, to undertake the task. His committee was composed mostly of bishops, a fact that led to the name, Bishops' Bible. Each translator was assigned a different section, and the whole was edited by Archbishop Parker. The translators were instructed to follow the Great Bible except where the Hebrew and Greek original required changes.

The Bishops' Bible was four years in the making and appeared in 1568. For a while it took the place of the Great Bible in an official way but actually did not displace the Geneva Bible as the Bible of the people. Since its official sanction was ecclesiastical rather than political, it lacked both royal approval and popular support. Its use among the clergy was endorsed by a convocation in 1571, but even this decree failed to make it popular.

10. Rheims-Douai Bible

The Rheims-Douai Bible is the Geneva Bible in reverse. Protestant scholars in exile under Mary produced the Geneva Bible. Now Roman Catholic scholars, fleeing from the persecution under Elizabeth, went to the Continent, where they published the Rheims-Douai Version in 1610. The publication of a Catholic Bible in English was not to be expected at any time in view of the official attitude of the church that

held that Latin was the sacred language and that it was not wise for the common people to read the Scripture. The new version, therefore, was undertaken with great reluctance.

Why was it done at all? The answer can only be that it was a defensive move to offset the popularity of the Protestant English Bibles. The publication of an English version under Catholic auspices most certainly did not imply encouragement of lay reading of the Scripture. The preface, in fact, warns against use of the Bible by the people.⁵ It was issued in self-protection or, perhaps, with the more aggressive motive of swinging political opinion back to Catholicism.

William Allen, an Oxford fellow, founded an English college at Douai in Flanders in 1568. The New Testament was commenced here under the leadership of Gregory Martin, also of Oxford. In 1578 the college was removed to Rheims, where the New Testament was published in 1609–10; hence, the name Rheims-Douai Version.

The translation, of course, was directly from the Vulgate, although reference was made to the Greek texts for the New Testament. The marginal interpretations were just as Catholic in their slant as the Geneva commentary had been Protestant. A typical example of the polemical exegesis is the marginal comment attached to Matthew 6:24 (“No one can serve two masters”), which reads: “Two religions, God and Baal, Christ and Calvin, Mass and Communion, The Catholic Church and Heretical Conventicles.” As for the accuracy of the text as a translation of the Vulgate, nineteenth- and twen-

⁵ The preface to the New Testament stated that the Scripture should not be read by “husbandmen, artificers, apprentices, boys, girls, mistresses, maids,” and that it was not intended for “table talk, ale houses, boats, barges, and for every profane person and company.” It further stated that “in those better times men were not so curious as to abuse the blessed book of Christ.”

tieth-century translations based on fourth-century Greek manuscripts were to confirm certain Douai readings that were more accurate than other English versions of that period.⁶ On the whole, the Rheims-Douai Version was couched in a stilted Latinized vocabulary. A revision was made by Bishop Challoner in 1750, and in 1941 it was again revised in accordance with Hebrew and Greek sources and completely modernized.

11. *The King James Bible*

In 1604 James I, who had succeeded Elizabeth in 1603, called a conference to consider the petition of the Puritans to change the Prayer Book and service of worship. The outcome of this conference was far different from all expectations. During the course of the hearings, and quite accidentally, the question of the Bible was broached. Dr. John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and a Puritan himself, suggested that the king authorize the publication of a new Bible, inasmuch as those in use were "corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original." The final result of that suggestion was the King James Bible or Authorized Version of 1611.⁷

Dr. Reynolds' motion was opposed by the bishop of London, who visualized a new translation every year if such a practice was continued; but the king, either for personal mo-

⁶ The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13), for instance, does not appear in the Vulgate or the Douai Version and is omitted in the American Standard Version and Revised Standard Version, since it is not found in the older Greek manuscripts. But it does appear in the Authorized Version.

⁷ Many interesting sidelights on the English translations from Wycliffe to the Authorized Version are to be found in *The English Hexapla* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1841).

tives or because he resented the Puritan bias of the Geneva Bible, was heartily in favor of the project. Whatever the king's motive, his choice of translators was made with wisdom and catholicity; the committee of fifty-four men included Anglicans and Puritans, high churchmen and low, clergy and laymen. The work was begun in 1607 and forty-seven actually participated. The appointment of a large committee was an improvement, for previous revisions had been undertaken by one man, assisted by one or two friends. The committee was instructed to follow the Bishops' Bible mainly, but to consult the Greek text of Erasmus as revised by Stephanus and Beza, the Vulgate, and current Hebrew texts, including the Complutensian Polyglot. Free use was made of the Geneva and Rheims-Douai Bibles wherever it was thought advisable. Reference was also made to Luther's German and Olivetan's French Bibles, the Latin translations of Pagninus, Münster, and Castalio, and the Syriac New Testament. As a revision of the Bishops' Bible, the King James Version is virtually the Tyndale Bible (Tyndale→Matthew's→Great→Bishops'→King James).

The committee was divided into six sections, two to meet at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. Each group was assigned a certain portion of the Scripture. The work of each group was reviewed by the other groups; in fact, every man passed judgment on the work of every other man, and six final revisions were made of the work in its entirety before publication.

The translators were instructed to use no marginal notes except necessary explanations of Hebrew and Greek words or alternate translations of original words. The preface of the 1611 edition indicates that the translators considered them-

selves revisers and no more; they were merely trying to "build on the foundation that went before."⁸ The Authorized Version of 1611 included the Apocrypha, but later it was dropped as noncanonical. The chapter and verse division was the same as in the Bishops' Bible.

The first revised edition of the Authorized Version appeared in 1613 with some three hundred changes. This was followed by revisions in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. The 1769 edition represented a more thoroughgoing modernization and is substantially the edition of the present day. Bishop Lloyd's edition, issued in 1701, was the first to use Archbishop Usher's chronology, which dated the creation of the world at 4004 B.C. (!). This chronological pattern has had an influence throughout the English-speaking world out of all proportion to its worth.

The sources for the Authorized Version naturally were inferior to those used by later translators. No consistency was observed in proper names and measurements, and the same object was given a variety of renderings. The translators' knowledge of Greek and Hebrew usage left much to be desired. Archaisms, solecisms, and erroneous translations, of which there were many, came under much closer scrutiny in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the Revised Version appeared.

In time, the Authorized Version replaced both the Geneva edition as the popular Bible and the Bishops' as the offi-

⁸ For accurate information on the justification of revision, method of procedure, rules and objectives, the reader is referred to the prefaces of the Authorized Version, Revised Version, and American Standard Version. There is no substitute for these original statements of the translators. Unfortunately, in the case of the Authorized Version, modern editions carry only the obsequious, florid dedication to King James and omit the more important preface of the translators.

cial or ecclesiastical Bible. There was no thought of another Bible for two hundred and seventy years. The King James Bible became *the* Bible for the Protestant world. Its influence on the speech and literature of England is vast and well known.⁹ From 1900 to 1950 some eleven hundred titles of books, mostly novels in English, were taken from the Bible (usually the Authorized Version). Biblical phrases in common usage today are numerous: "the apple of his eye," "cast thy bread upon the waters," "a still small voice," "the little foxes that spoil the vines," "precept upon precept, line upon line," "the signs of the times," "a thorn in the flesh," "labor of love," "the handwriting on the wall," "the widow's mite," "the highways and hedges," "a pearl of great price," "stand in awe," "the fat of the land," "the end is not yet," "to entertain angels unaware," "tell it not in Gath."

The paramount position of the Authorized Version in England and America became so firmly fixed that to this day it is not uncommon to hear a parishioner remark (after hearing the preacher read from the American Standard Version or Revised Standard Version or a modern translation): "That was interesting, but I prefer the Bible." For him and thousands like him, the King James is the only form in which the real Bible ever appeared. The problem of the Hebrew and Greek texts, manuscripts and versions, translations and revisions, is not in his world.

Like all the other Bibles, the Authorized Version contained many misprints and mistranslations, one of the most famous being Matthew 23:24: "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." It should read: "strain

⁹ See C. A. Dinsmore, *The English Bible as Literature* (Boston, 1931); J. H. Penniman, *A Book about the English Bible* (New York, 1919); M. B. Crook, *The Bible and Its Literary Associations* (New York, 1937).

out a gnat," but the mistake still appears in the present edition.¹⁰

12. *The Revised Version*

The Revised Version (1881–85) was part of a concatenation of events that caused an intellectual upheaval in the Western world almost as momentous as that which precipitated Tyndale's translation. The cultural rebirth of Europe and America in the nineteenth century was almost as far-reaching in its consequences as the Renaissance. Nothing less could have threatened the monopoly that the King James Bible enjoyed for two hundred and fifty years.

The Authorized Version was revised several times in the seventeenth century because of the increasing criticism of the translation. During the reign of the Stuarts, England became so unbelievably pagan that very little thought was given to the Bible. By the middle of the eighteenth century the King James Bible had taken on such an aura of sanctity that even the idea of revision was a sacrilege. But by the middle of the nineteenth century a combination of developments forced the issue. One was the discovery and availability of older and more authoritative manuscripts than those known in 1611; namely *Codex Alexandrinus*, a fifth-century manuscript, and the great fourth-century manuscripts, *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus*. These texts carried many important readings that differed from the *Textus Receptus*. Some of the New Testa-

¹⁰ Matthew's Bible was nicknamed the "Bug Bible" because it retained a misprint from Coverdale: "Thou shalt not nede to be afrayed for eny bugges by night" (Ps. 91:5). The Authorized Version as revised in 1631 came to be known as the Wicked Bible from an unfortunate omission in the rendering of Ex. 20:14, which read: "Thou shalt commit adultery."

ment of the *Textus Receptus* was from the Vulgate, and the Old Testament was taken from four inferior Hebrew recensions. Tischendorf's discovery of *Codex Aleph*, the editing of *B*, and the appearance of new critical Greek New Testaments by Tischendorf and by Westcott and Hort would have been reason enough for a new translation of the Bible.

Textual Criticism, which in the early part of the seventeenth century was unknown, had become a specialized science with a well-defined critical apparatus and trained biblical scholars. With two thousand manuscripts available for examination, collation, and editing — two of them from the fourth century — a closer approximation of the original was guaranteed. Further, knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages had increased tremendously, and scholars were much better qualified for the work of translation.

The pervasive influence of the theory of evolution, with its implication of the inevitability of change in all things, called into question the belief in static revelation, the idea of the absolute, the infallibility of Scripture, and the biblical account of creation. The theory of evolution supported the empirical method and the ideas of process, immanence, and emergence. The nineteenth century also gave birth to the science of Historical Criticism, which applied the genetic method to religion and biblical literature; on this background arose a new study of comparative religion, the history of religion, philology, and the social sciences. This resulted in the developmental view, which approached Scripture from the standpoint of hereditary factors and environmental influences.

The scientific outlook of the nineteenth century, in short, revolutionized man's thinking, and a new interest in biblical research was one of the results of this revolution. For schol-

ars, therefore, if not for the people at large, a new translation was a necessity.

But one of the most cogent reasons for the Revised Version was the change in the English language in two hundred and seventy years. Hundreds of Elizabethan expressions were now obsolete and meaningless. How could the nineteenth-century reader of the King James Bible know that "knave" meant "boy," that "honest" meant "chaste," that "leasing" meant "falsehood," that "purtenance" meant "inward," that "carriages" meant "baggage," that "scrip" meant "wallet," and that "chapiter" meant "capital of a column"? According to the Authorized Version, the head of John the Baptist was brought in on a "charger" (Mark 6:28). To a modern reader this could only mean a galloping horse rather than a platter. Confronting Acts 28:13, the twentieth-century reader wonders why the travelers "fetched a compass" (this originally meant "circled around" or "made a circuit"). Such archaisms pointed clearly to the need for a new translation that would suit the vocabulary of modern times.

Many grammatical slips were also in need of correction. It is useless to teach a boy in school that the nominative, rather than the accusative, follows the expression "I am," when he reads in Mark 8:27: "Whom do men say that I am?" Likewise, any schoolboy knows that the pronoun "which" should not follow "Our Father" in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus was not tempted "of" but "by" the Devil. These and many other examples of poor usage called for a modernization of the Authorized Version.

On February 10, 1870, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce suggested that a revision of the Authorized Version be made with the idea of correcting errors, improving the vocabulary, and

embodying renderings more in accord with the older manuscripts. A committee¹¹ was formed and rules of procedure were drawn up. The New Testament work was initiated in Westminster Abbey on June 22, 1870, with Bishop J. C. Eliott presiding. A subcommittee of American theologians under the chairmanship of Philip Schaff was appointed to collaborate with the British committee. The New Testament was published in 1881, the Old Testament in 1885, and the Apocrypha in 1895.

Several mechanical changes were made, the most noticeable of which were the rearranging of the text in sense paragraphs, the printing of poetical material in verse form, the omission of all commentary and headings, and the incorporation of critical footnotes citing alternate or more literal readings. From the standpoint of Textual Criticism, the changes surpassed all predictions. A sample of textual change is seen in I John 5:8, which in the Authorized Version reads: "For there are three that bear record, (in heaven — the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth) the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and these agree in one." The section in parentheses is not found in the older manuscripts and was therefore omitted from the Revised Version as a theological interpolation. The doxology found at the end of the Lord's Prayer in the Authorized Version was omitted for the same reason. Many other sentences found only in *Codex Bezae* were omitted in the Revised Version. The longer ending of Mark (16:9-20) was included, but a note was attached indicating that it was not found in the two older manuscripts.

¹¹ The committee consisted of such distinguished Hebrew and Greek scholars as A. B. Davidson, S. R. Driver, A. H. Sayce, T. K. Cheyne, H. Alford, J. Eadie, F. J. A. Hort, J. B. Lightfoot, W. F. Moulton, R. C. Trench, and B. F. Westcott.

Many obsolete expressions were modernized: "cake" for "cracknel," "living" for "quick," "boil" for "botch," and "distress" for "straitness." "Holy Spirit" was substituted for "Holy Ghost" and "Sheol" for "Hell."

The Revised Version represented the fruits of two centuries of study. No previous scholars could have had the linguistic knowledge and the technical equipment possessed by this committee. The Greek text for the New Testament was that of Westcott and Hort, although other editions were consulted. The Masoretic text of the Hebrew had, by that time, been re-edited and improved. The result of their ten years' labor was a great gain for students of the Bible, if not for the layman. The Revised Version has been widely criticized as being too literal and altogether lacking in the lofty, spiritual tone that made the King James Bible so popular. But what it lost in beauty it gained in accuracy, and that was important. The Pauline Epistles, especially, appeared in a more intelligible form.

Opposition was not long in asserting itself, as has been the case with every revision. The Revised Version did not displace the Authorized Version in England largely because of the long familiarity with the literary form of the King James Bible and the emotional associations attached to it. But it did take its place in universities, church schools, and among the clergy and students.

13. The American Standard Version

The American subcommittee appointed to collaborate with the British revision committee had taken its work seriously and had submitted many suggestions, many of which

were ignored. Numerous obsolete expressions and faulty translations of the original Hebrew and Greek appeared in the final draft of the Revised Version over the protest of the American committee. It was natural, therefore, that the members of the American committee would want to publish a revision of their own.

The American committee was pledged to give no sanction to the publication of the Revised Version in America in any form for a period of fourteen years. But the committee continued to function and at the expiration of that period published the American Standard Version (1901), which received immediate and widespread use for religious education, in schools and colleges, and among the clergy. In spite of its obvious superiority over all previous translations, however, the American Standard Version has never replaced the Authorized Version as the family and pulpit Bible of America. The general human inertia and apathy toward biblical scholarship is reflected in bookstores and libraries, where, in many instances, supposedly informed clerks do not know one version from another.

The American committee revised the appendix of the Revised Version, which had been written hastily, and added many significant changes in the text. "Jehovah," for instance, was substituted for "Lord" and "God" on the grounds that "a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine Name as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate in the English or any other version of the Old Testament."¹² In the interest of grammatical accuracy the pronoun "who" was used in place of "which" when relating to persons. The orthography and idiom of 1611, which the Revised

¹² For complete details on the procedure and reasons for changes, see the preface of the American Standard Version.

Version had retained in many passages, were brought up to date.

The chief concern of the members of the American committee was to include readings that they had recommended on the basis of superior documentary evidence but that had been declined by the British reviewers. Also, many of the changes were made for the sake of consistency, where the Revised Version had translated the same word in different ways. The Babylonians and the ancient Hebrews regarded the liver, the kidneys, and the bowels as the seat of affection. Assigning mental and emotional attributes to physical organs has survived in the modern poetic use of "heart," but the Hebrews used what to our taste would be more offensive terms. These were removed in the American Standard Version, and more euphemistic expressions were substituted. The word "bowels," for instance, wherever used in the psychological sense, was changed to "compassion," "anguish," or "heart." "Reins," meaning "kidneys," was changed to "heart," "dung" to "refuse," and "stinketh" to "decayeth." Because of the change in the connotation of "charity," the word "love" was substituted in I Corinthians 13.

14. The Revised Standard Version

The American Standard Version was really only a correction or revision of the Revised Version, and, while it contained improvements, the changes were neither drastic nor thoroughgoing. Biblical research and archaeological discovery in the half-century that followed only confirmed the inadequacy of the 1901 edition. In the half-century following the publication of the Revised Version, archaeologists had

learned much about the Koiné Greek of the New Testament from potsherds and papyri found in Egypt. They had also been at work reconstructing the Babylonian sources for the Old Testament traditions. During the first three decades of the twentieth century new manuscripts were discovered and edited, notably the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Washington and Koridethi gospels, and the Chester Beatty Papyri. These discoveries shed new light on the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Scholars soon realized that the modernization of the King James Bible was not fully accomplished by either the Revised Version or the American Standard Version. Modern private translations appearing in the first quarter of the twentieth century emphasized the need for a more thorough revision, but such translations do not have the official support of the church. It remained for the Revised Standard Version of 1946-52 to accomplish this goal.

The work was initiated in 1930 with the formulation of a committee under the chairmanship of Dean Luther A. Weigle of Yale.¹⁸ Old and New Testament sections were organized, and meetings were held for the determination of policy. The aim of the committee, in its own words, was to produce "a revision of the present American Standard Edition of the Bible in the light of the results of modern scholarship, this revision to be designed for use in public and private worship, and to be in the direction of the simple, classic English style of the King James Version." The members of the committee were chosen with three things in mind: competence in biblical scholarship, appreciation of the best taste in English literature, and

¹⁸ The committee consisted of the following: Luther A. Weigle, Julius A. Bewer, Henry J. Cadbury, Edgar J. Goodspeed, James Moffatt, William R. Taylor, Walter Russell Bowie, George Dahl, Frederick C. Grant, William A. Irwin, Willard L. Sperry, Leroy Waterman, Millar Burrows, Clarence T. Craig, Abdel R. Wentz, Kyle M. Yates, William F. Albright, J. Philip Hyatt, Herbert G. May, James Muilenburg, Harry M. Orlinsky, and Fleming James.

experience in the conduct of public worship and religious education.

We can assume that their directions to attain the "simple, classic English style of the King James Version" referred not so much to phraseology as to spirit, for obviously one of the chief reasons for the undertaking was to avoid the archaisms and inaccurate paraphrasing of the Authorized Version. More specifically, their task was to attempt to sail between the Scylla of the free translation of the King James Version and the Charybdis of the literal or prosaic renderings of the Revised Version and the American Standard Version; to combine, in other words, readability and accuracy — a difficult commission.

The cumulative critical opinion regarding the Revised Standard Version, as of the present writing, is that this two-fold aim of readability in public usage and accuracy of translation has been achieved in the most satisfying manner. To appreciate the smooth, natural flow of language of this version, one should read aloud such passages as Luke 10 and Acts 11:19-26. Elizabethan expressions that had been retained in the American Standard Version were now eliminated. "You" and "your" took the place of "thou" and "thine," "to" was substituted for "into," and "enter" for "enter into." Such antique expressions as "on this wise," "set at nought," and "privily" were modernized. The American Standard Version had kept such seventeenth-century usages as "provided" for "foreseen," "providence" for "provision," and "suffer" for "allow." These likewise were corrected. The unpardonable "much people" of the American Standard Version was changed to "many people" (Acts 11:24), and the spies who "feigned themselves to be righteous" now "pretended to be sincere" (Luke 20:20).

The improvement made by the Revised Standard

Version is appreciated in the following sample from Luke 9:17:

American Standard Version: "And they ate, and were all filled: and there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets."

Revised Standard Version: "And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces."

The Revised Standard Version was published by Thomas Nelson and Sons and now appears under the copyright of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Perhaps the best way to appreciate the fact that the Revised Standard Version is a church-sponsored Bible in the direct line of descent from Tyndale and the Authorized Version is to read the title page, which has retained the same wording as all previous versions. The committee will continue as self-perpetuating in order to make future changes in the text. The Revised Standard Version has been well received (except in obscurantist circles) and is rapidly taking the place of the American Standard Version in classrooms, church schools, pulpits, and among the laity as well as the clergy.¹⁴

15. *Private Translations*

It remains for us to call attention to some of the modern-speech or private translations of the Bible. These, in every

¹⁴ For the description of the procedure of the committee and other interesting data on the Revised Standard Version, see the preface of the *Holy Bible; Revised Standard Version* (New York, 1952); H. S. May, *Our English Bible in the Making* (Philadelphia, 1952); I. M. Price, *The Ancestry of our English Bible* (2nd rev. ed.; New York, 1949).

instance, are the work of individuals and are not authorized by any church or council. They are published with two things in mind: to provide a more common or conversational type of translation than is permitted in the authorized Bibles, and to improve, wherever possible, on the renderings of the Hebrew and Greek texts. The impetus behind these private translations, at least in the case of the New Testament, was the growing realization, at the turn of the century, that the Koiné Greek of the New Testament was the language of the common people, differing completely from both the classical and the Septuagint Greek, and therefore should be translated, not in a literary style, but in a conversational or household English.

The first important private translation was the Weymouth New Testament which appeared in 1903. This was an independent free translation based on the Resultant Greek Testament of the translator, Richard F. Weymouth. *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, as it was called, was a British publication, but an American edition was published in 1943. It was issued with the idea of supplementing or correcting the Revised Version, and Weymouth did succeed in eliminating some antiquated expressions.

The *Twentieth Century New Testament*, another British publication, was originally issued "tentatively" in 1901, but appeared in its revised form in 1904. This anonymous translation represented the combined efforts of some twenty scholars who wanted to give the New Testament to the people in the language they used in their daily life. One radical change made was the arrangement of the books in the order of their composition; that is, Mark came first in the gospel section, and I Thessalonians in the Paulines. The names of the translators have never been known by the public.

In 1885 R. G. Moulton, of the University of Chicago, undertook the publication of the Revised Version in separate volumes. The complete twenty-one-volume edition appeared in 1907 under the title, *The Modern Reader's Bible*. This is not a modern-speech translation but is included here because of the typographical arrangements that provided greater readability. The text is actually the Revised Version with some modifications.

The Riverside New Testament (1923) was the work of William G. Ballantine, late professor of Biblical Literature at Springfield College. Dr. Ballantine used Nestle's Greek text and held to a more literal policy of translation.

In 1913 James Moffatt published *The New Testament: A New Translation*. This became a popular translation on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁵ Professor Moffatt taught formerly at Glasgow and later at Union Theological Seminary and was recognized as one of the leading authorities in the field. His New Testament was not only well translated but was couched in the idiom of the twentieth century. His Old Testament was published in 1924, and the complete Bible in 1926. In his translation of the Old Testament Moffatt revised the Masoretic text in many places.

The most distinctively American and one of the most satisfactory private translations is that of Edgar J. Goodspeed. Weymouth and Moffatt unconsciously retained British idioms, and Ballantine's translation was not entirely free of the influence of the King James Bible. Goodspeed's *New Testament: An American Translation* (1923), comes closer to the American language than any other and, having the appearance of a novel, is most attractive from the mechanical and typo-

¹⁵ This was the outgrowth of his *Historical New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1901), a critical introduction to the New Testament.

graphical standpoint. Many of the improvements of the Revised Standard Version, such as the substitution of "you" for "thou" and "cents" for "shillings," were anticipated by Goodspeed, although as a member of the committee he made it clear that the Revised Standard Version was not to be another "Goodspeed Bible."

In 1927 the University of Chicago Press issued *The Old Testament: An American Translation*. This was edited by J. M. P. Smith of the University of Chicago. Smith's Old Testament and Goodspeed's New Testament were published as *The Bible: An American Translation*, sometimes called the Chicago Bible. In 1933 Goodspeed brought out *The Short Bible: An American Translation*, a volume chronologically arranged and containing only those books and passages which, in the mind of the editors, were historically or religiously valuable. In 1938 Goodspeed made a completely fresh translation of the *Apocrypha*, which was issued in connection with the Chicago Bible, and finally in 1950 he published *The Apostolic Fathers*.

The Centenary Translation of the New Testament (1924) was the work of Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery. It was published in connection with the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the American Baptist Publication Society.

S. H. Hooke of the University of London supervised the publication of *The Basic Bible* (1950). *The New Testament in Basic English* had appeared in 1941. For the New Testament only 850 different words were employed, but the basic vocabulary was increased to 1,000 for the Old Testament. This was a novel experiment but imposes an undue restriction on the translators.

C. H. Rieu, editor of the Penguin Classics, published *The*

Four Gospels: A New Translation in 1953 and *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation* in 1957. One might question his assertion in the introduction that "the four gospels are spiritually supreme largely *because* they are great literature" and that the church chose them because of their literary and artistic superiority. Mr. Rieu has, however, rightly avoided the classical and literary style in his translation, which preserves the power and urgency of the original text and is, at the same time, unpretentious in style and totally free of word-for-word literalness.

J. B. Phillips' *The New Testament in Modern English* appeared in 1958. This translation conveys the spirit of the original Greek of the New Testament to the modern reader in a language that is at once comprehensible and faithful to the original tongue. It is a skillful rendering with no trace of subjective interpretation or slant, but with a precise knowledge of the vernacular of both first-century Greek and twentieth-century English.

Recent Roman Catholic Bibles can hardly be called private translations, but it is interesting to note in passing that several scholarly revisions have been made in the twentieth century, notably *The Westminster Version of the Sacred Scripture* (1935), *The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, edited by C. J. Callan and J. A. McHugh and translated by F. A. Spencer (1937), *The New Testament Translated from the Latin Vulgate; a Revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version* (1941), and, in England in 1944, a translation of the Vulgate by Ronald Knox.

The only recent English work by Jewish scholars has been *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text, a New Translation*, published by the Jewish Publication Society in 1917.

From Wycliffe to Rieu is a long distance. Some of the changes in English usage may be noted in the forms in which the following sample verse (Acts 17:22) appears:

Wycliffe: Men of Atenes, bi alle thingis, I se zou as veyn wor-schippers.

Tyndale: Ye men of Attens, I perceave that in all things ye are to superstitious.

Geneva: Ye men of Athens, I perceave that in all things ye are to superstitious.

Rheims: Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive you as it were superstitious.

Authorized Version: Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

Revised Version: Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious.

American Standard Version: Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious.

Revised Standard Version: Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

Weymouth: Men of Athens, I perceive that you are in every respect remarkably religious.

Centenary: Men of Athens, I perceive that in all respects you are remarkable religious.

Twentieth Century: Men of Athens, On every hand I see signs of your being very religious.

Moffatt: Men of Athens, I observe wherever I turn that you are a most religious people.

Ballantine: Men of Athens, I see that you are in every way unusually reverential to the Gods.

Basic English: O men of Athens, I see that you are overmuch given to fear of the Gods.

Goodspeed: Men of Athens, from every point of view I see that you are extremely religious.

Phillips: Gentlemen of Athens, my own eyes tell me that you are in all respects an extremely religious people.

Rieu: Men of Athens, I notice that you are in many ways very interested in religion.

Part Five

A Brief History of the Higher Criticism

Chapter Thirteen

Exegesis in the Early Church

The term "Criticism" must be understood as a purely technical term, which does not carry the adverse or destructive connotation usually associated with the everyday use of the word. It means, rather, an objective analysis of biblical literature and can be divided into two classes: Lower and Higher. The Lower Criticism aims to determine as far as possible the original form of the text. This is done by a comparative study of manuscripts and early versions.

The Higher Criticism has to do with the origin, purpose, meaning, authenticity, characteristics, and chronology of the books of the Bible. The higher critic studies the sources that were used by the author of the book, the milieu in which the book was written, its dependence upon previous or contemporary cultures, its unity or lack of it, and its teachings. An appropriate example of the work of Higher Criticism is the discovery of the composite authorship of the Pentateuch and the formulation of a documentary theory regarding it, or the Two-Source — and Four-Source — theory proposed to solve the problem of the interrelation of the Synoptic Gospels.

The science of Biblical Criticism has a long history, and scholars of all faiths, Jewish and Christian, have contributed to its growth. To these dedicated persons we owe all that we know about the Bible.

1. Jewish Interpretation

Having described the formation, canonization, and transmission of the Bible, we turn now to the history of interpretation. Our survey will be confined to those periods in which there were distinct changes in the methodology of interpretation; namely, the critical or early period of the church, the post-Reformation period, and the twentieth century.

The classical Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament was focused almost exclusively on the Law as the absolute revelation of God, supernaturally revealed to Moses, who wrote the entire Pentateuch. The rabbinical approach to the Scripture was not critical or historical. It was literal in regard to the requirements of the Law, but symbolic or mystical in its treatment of numbers and letters. Hillel (30 B.C. to 9 A.D.), however, while not scientific in his method, held that a verse must always be considered in the light of its context, a basic criterion of modern criticism.

The most important early Jewish interpreter was Philo of Alexandria (contemporary of Hillel). A Greek-speaking Alexandrian, he was thoroughly eclectic, being heir to both the Jewish Law and Greek philosophy. For him, Moses and Plato were coequal. His aim was to reconcile the Jewish religion with the Greek culture.

Philo represents the first clear divergence from the static, literal interpretation of Scripture. Recognizing that certain passages obviously could not be taken literally, he resorted to allegorization, a method used by Greek writers in harmonizing their philosophy with the older poets. In order to obviate contradictory or absurd passages, he read a hidden meaning into them. For example, in his commentary on Genesis 2:1

he says it is foolish to think that the world was created in six days: the number six is used purely in a symbolic sense. Likewise, he questions both the biblical account of the creation of woman and the statement that Cain built a city, when there were supposedly only three human beings in existence at that time.

Philo thus rules out the literal meaning just as emphatically as modern critics do, though he was seeing hidden meanings. His method was purely arbitrary: numbers and names had sacred and esoteric meanings — the meanings he wanted them to have. Scripture with him was miraculously and verbally inspired; the writer, Moses, was a passive instrument in the hands of God.

An appraisal of Jesus' interpretation of the Scripture would be of supreme interest, but the gospel record is, unfortunately, too scanty and too subjectively written to be trustworthy. It is too difficult to distinguish between what Jesus actually said and thought and what his biographers claimed he said and thought. But we can be reasonably certain that, as a biblical critic, Jesus had little in common with the current Jewish method. The essence of his interpretation was discrimination. He allied himself with the prophetic tradition and was radically opposed to Pharisaic legalism.

The key to his attitude toward the Scripture is found in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 17-20), where he declares his intention to fulfill the Law in its spiritual, rather than its technical, meaning. For the old Law he substituted a new principle: the active cultivation of brotherly love rather than a passive abstention from murder; the maintenance of a wholesome mind rather than a mere avoidance of adultery; the life of integrity rather than casuistry; and sacrificial good will rather than reciprocal or calculated kind-

ness. He placed human welfare above sacerdotalism and man above institutions. He was impatient with the current casuistical interpretation of Scripture and placed ethical purity above ceremonial purity.

His distinction between the definitely religious values in the Old Testament and the cultic regulations is seen in such passages as Matthew 12:1-8 (the well-being of man is more important than strict observance of the Sabbath); Matthew 15:1-20 (moral defilement is a more serious sin than ceremonial defilement); and Matthew 9:10-13 (righteousness is more important than ritual). His differentiation of the prophetic or ethical element in the Old Testament from the priestly or ceremonial is further demonstrated in Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34, where he quotes the Shema, adding to it the love of neighbor, and concludes: "There is no other commandment greater than these."

The closing verses of the Sermon on the Mount reveal the self-consciousness of Jesus as a critic and as an authority in his own right. He was convinced that his ethical principles constituted the *summum bonum* and that a man could build his life on them as bedrock. It was said that "he taught them as one who had authority and not as their scribes." The scribes quoted the Law, which they had memorized; the authority of Jesus was experiential and pragmatic, an appeal to conscience, insight, and conviction.

Jesus clearly transcended the current ceremonial interpretation of the Law; otherwise he was essentially Jewish in his attitude toward the Scripture. He regarded the Pentateuch as inspired writing and Moses as its author. He took the Old Testament literally and, if the evangelists are to be relied on, interpreted the Messianic passages as a prediction of his own life.

Paul's exegesis is rabbinic, but with a Christocentric application. He uses the Law as a forensic medium or bridge for his presentation of Jesus to his Jewish constituency. His preaching to the gentile world necessitated the use of Hellenistic ideas and practices, but, whatever the source of his teaching, it was only as a means to an end — the exaltation of Jesus. The typological use of the Old Testament as a prefigurement or preparation for Christ and the New Covenant is seen more specifically in the Book of Hebrews, a good example of the allegorical method.

2. Patristic Interpretation

The writings of the early church fathers and apologists must be viewed in the light of the New Testament, which had been written by the second century and, if not canonized, was at least regarded as having scriptural authority. Second-century interpretation differs little from that of New Testament authors, in that the Old Testament was regarded as a prediction of the New Testament and Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Such is the exegesis of Clement of Rome (100 A.D.), who was completely lacking in historical sense. He read back into the Old Testament his own views and those of early Christianity. In fact, he treated the Old Testament as Christian literature.

The author of the Epistle of Barnabas (100–125 A.D.) shares with Clement of Rome the semi-Gnostic or esoteric view of Old Testament interpretation: the Old Testament was parabolic throughout, full of mysteries, unintelligible to the Jews, and understood only by Christian teachers who possessed the "gift" or ability to decipher it. Barnabas uses both

the rabbinical method of assigning numerical values to letters and the typological exegesis that flourished among later writers. Everything in the Old Testament was a prototype of Christ. When Moses stretched out his arms in the battle with the Amalekites (Ex. 17:12), he was prefiguring the death of Jesus on the cross!

The second-century apologists — Justin Martyr, Theophilus, and Athenagoras — continued the earlier tendency to see the Old Testament as a prediction of Christ and the New Testament. Since the prophets were inspired as passive instruments in the hand of God, they naturally possessed foreknowledge and predicted future events specifically. Needless to say, this misinterpretation of the prophetic function has flourished to the present day.

Throughout the Old Testament, Justin identifies God the Father with the Logos or Christ. He also makes use of the allegorical method. Christ's death on the cross, for instance, was symbolized in the roasting of the paschal lamb (Ex. 12:8).

The mystery, then, of the lamb which God enjoined to be sacrificed as the passover, was a type of Christ . . . and that lamb, which was commanded to be wholly roasted, was a symbol of the suffering of the cross which Christ would undergo. For the lamb, which is roasted, is roasted and dressed up in the form of the cross. For one spit is transfixed right through from the lower parts up to the head and one across the back, to which are attached the legs of the lamb.¹

With Justin, the allegorical method reached its most fantastic form.

The most important second-century interpretation was that of Irenaeus, bishop of Gaul, whose exegesis was most effective when he was refuting the Gnostics. In his treatise *Against Heresies*, he insists that biblical passages must never

¹ *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 40.

be taken out of context, a principle that alone is enough to give him a high place in the history of criticism. He recognized that to do so made it possible to prove anything by Scripture. In his accusation of the heretics, he writes:

Then, again, collecting a set of expressions and names scattered here and there in the Scripture, they twist them, as we have already said, from a natural to a non-natural sense. In so doing, they act like those who bring forward any kind of hypothesis they fancy, and then endeavor to support them out of the poems of Homer so that the ignorant imagine that Homer actually composed the verses with that particular hypothesis in mind. . . . In like manner, he who retains unchangeable in his heart the rule of truth . . . will doubtless recognize the names and expressions taken from the Scripture, but will by no means acknowledge the blasphemous use which these men make of them. But when he has restored every one of the expressions quoted to its proper position, and has fitted it to the body of the truth, he will prove the figment of these heretics to be without foundation.²

So much for the one permanently valuable element in the exegesis of Irenaeus. In all other respects, he was no better than his contemporaries. He judged the Scripture by the authority of apostolic theological tradition and, by identifying the two, rendered impossible an objective reading of the Bible. He regarded the Old Testament as one complete prediction of Christ in all the details of his life and teaching. He also used the typological method in both the Old and the New Testament.

3. The Alexandrian School

As we enter the third century and move to Alexandria, the Athens of early Christianity and a great cosmopolitan cen-

² *Against Heresies*, Book I, chap. 9, sec. 4.

ter of learning, we encounter a more philosophical and eclectic point of view. The two great teachers of Alexandria, Clement and Origen, tried to accommodate the Christian religion to the Greek tradition and give it a more rational grounding. Clement of Alexandria (150–220 A.D.), who succeeded Pantaenus as head of the school of Alexandria, was primarily a philosopher. As an exegete, Clement tried to reconcile the Christian gospel with Greek thought, just as Philo had previously tried to bring together the Jewish Law and Greek philosophy. Philosophy, according to Clement, should be not the enemy but the handmaid of the Christian religion. Faith, in other words, does not rule out reason. Clement's system of thought was a synthesis of biblical and philosophical learning, an attempt to legitimize the Greek way of thinking within the framework of the apostolic tradition. It was an eclecticism calculated to broaden the appeal of Christianity in Hellenistic circles.

The key to Clement's exegesis was allegory, but, with him, it took a more elaborate and scholarly form than with Philo, Justin, or Irenaeus. For Clement, both the Old and New Testaments are symbolic. He interpreted Scripture as having several meanings — historical, moral, or mystical — depending upon the particular verse. Whatever its character, each verse was interpreted within a Christocentric frame of reference or, at least, Christian truth.

With Origen (185–254) allegorization assumes a still more systematic form. Many passages in the Scripture, he says, are impossible if taken literally; they are to be interpreted figuratively. All Scripture, in fact, has a symbolic or mystical meaning, a revelation of some spiritual truth. Although in some instances this truth may be unfathomable, it is our task to pursue the ultimate mystery of the Scripture as far as pos-

sible. Sometimes this higher truth is concealed in a narrative or law that, though it may appeal to the ignorant, is not to be taken literally.

Origen's allegorical method proceeds from his dualistic world view: the terrestrial is the image of the celestial. Some texts have a bodily or physical sense, others a spiritual sense. He further sees a threefold meaning in Scripture: the bodily or literal, the moral, and the spiritual. His main concern was to grasp the inner or spiritual truth, which was for him in every case, a justification of the Christian faith and a refutation of heresy.

Apparently Origen resorted to the allegorical interpretation as a way out of the dilemma of literalism. He could see the impossibility of accepting certain passages in the Bible as factual or historical; yet he lacked the perspective of later scholars, who would be able to assign such passages to garbled report, myth, or lack of proper knowledge. It must be said, however, that Origen's manipulation of the text is more intelligent and less dominated by the doctrines of the church than that of any previous interpreter. The allegorical method in the hands of Origen was the best that could be expected at that time and might be said, moreover, to have saved the Christian religion from blind literalism and unreason.

Not only in the allegorical interpretation was Origen a child of his age but also in his view of inspiration as dependent upon the Christian tradition rather than upon the biblical content itself. He believed that Christ was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. As a critic he lacked in historical sense, and some of his symbolic interpretations are fantastic and arbitrary. On the other hand, his rejection of the literal view was in itself a step in the direction of scientific criticism. For example:

For who that has understanding will suppose that the first, and second, and third day, and the evening and the morning, existed without a sun, and moon, and stars? and that the first day was, as it were, also without a sky? . . . And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that any one doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally. . . . And what need is there to say more, since those who are not altogether blind can collect countless instances of a similar kind recorded as having occurred, but which did not literally take place? Nay, the Gospels themselves are filled with the same kind of narratives; e.g. the devil leading Jesus up into a high mountain, in order to show Him from thence the kingdoms of the whole world, and the glory of them.³

In the same work he mentions passages that "are not literally true but absurd and impossible."⁴

Regarding some of the so-called laws of Moses, he comments: "And if we come to the legislation of Moses, many of the laws manifest the irrationality, and others the impossibility, of their literal observance."⁵ He revolted against the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament and said that those who insist that Moses saw God "fall into the absurdity of asserting that God is corporeal."⁶ He regarded as barbarous the divine command in Genesis 17:14 to kill uncircumcised children.

Origen's critical treatment of the New Testament is remarkably advanced, for he calls attention to various discrepancies and contradictions in the gospels.⁷ He was one of the first to escape from the Jewish and Zoroastrian eschatology; for him, as for Paul, immortality was a spiritual continuity

³ *de Principiis*, IV, 1, 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 4, 3.

⁷ Commentary on John X, 2-3; *de Principiis*, IV, 1, 18.

rather than a resurrection of the physical body.⁸ His eschatology was at variance with the current thought on judgment, heaven, and hell. With him, the death of Christ was not a substitutionary atonement. Finally, the modern relegation of miracle to a secondary and unimportant role was to a certain degree anticipated by this great third-century teacher in his assertion that the power of healing diseases is not evidence of anything especially divine.⁹

4. *The Antiochian School*

The critical spirit of Origen may well be regarded as the foundation of the Antiochian school. In fact, it would not be inappropriate to consider Origen as a representative of the Syrian tradition rather than the Alexandrian. After his expulsion from Alexandria, he lived in Caesarea, where, as a lecturer, he attracted pupils from far and near. A school was organized at Caesarea by Pamphilus (d. 309), who established also an exegetical library in which Origen's Hexapla was kept. The founding of the school at Antioch is credited to the famous scholar Lucian (240-312), who studied in Caesarea under Origen and became the teacher of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia.

The Antiochian school differed from the Alexandrian in its Jewish backgrounds and its more literal interpretation of Scripture. This twofold difference is seen in the teaching of the early Antiochian leaders: Paul of Samosata, Lucian, Dorotheus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, a difference that results, on the one hand, in a more monotheistic and less trinitarian

⁸ *Contra Celsum*, VI, 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 25.

tendency and, on the other, in less emphasis on allegory. These two tendencies mark the Antiochian school as the prototype of a later liberal theology and of Historical Criticism.

The two most important representatives of the Antiochian school were Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) and John Chrysostom (347-407). These two exegetes paved the way for the scientific method in biblical interpretation, but they owed much to their teacher Diodore (fourth century), who wrote the first actual treatise on the principles of interpretation, a discussion of the historical method as contrasted to the allegorical.

Theodore was a presbyter of Antioch and later bishop of Mopsuestia. He was a Greek and had studied philosophy in the Sophist school of Libanius before becoming a pupil of the Christian Diodore. Theodore's commentary on the Epistles of Paul is strikingly modern and exceptional among ancient writers. In like manner, his other commentaries show an independent mind unhampered by the traditional view of inspiration. He questions the inspiration of Ecclesiastes; in fact, he assigns all the Wisdom literature to a noncanonical position as merely a form of Greek learning, edifying but not divinely inspired.

Since he lived during and after the closing period of the New Testament canon, his views on canonicity are all the more noteworthy. He rejected the Catholic Epistles and James as unworthy of canonization. He also anticipated modern criticism in assigning some of the Psalms to the Maccabean period. A final modern touch separating him from his contemporaries is his refusal to see the Old Testament as merely a prediction of the New. This view of prophecy was, for the time, nothing less than radical. He read the prophets

as related to their times rather than as predictions of Christ and the church.

An Arian tendency is also seen in Theodore's Christological interpretation. He held that Christ was not recognized as divine by his apostles but only as Messiah.

Theodore's greatest achievement was his insistence on holding to the original or literal sense of the Scripture, as far as that could be ascertained, rather than reading into it ulterior meanings by way of allegory. His greatest weakness was the dogmatic bias with which he approached the Scripture. His theological preconceptions kept him from being truly scientific.

What has been said of Theodore, as an exegete, can to a certain extent be applied to John Chrysostom, who broke away from Alexandrian allegorization and took a more literal view of the Scripture, but who was influenced by ecclesiastical tradition even more than his contemporary. There is, in other words, more theological bias in Chrysostom and consequently less freedom in his interpretation. However, he shared Theodore's view of inspiration, which diverged strongly from the Alexandrians.

The critical approach of Origen and the Antiochians is continued, to a degree, in Jerome (340-420), who pioneered in Hebraic study, archaeological research, and translation. His work on the Vulgate shows an affinity with the scholars of Antioch in their interest in the Hebrew text. Like his predecessors, however, he made extensive use of allegory in his exegesis.

Augustine (354-430), whose theology became the norm for Catholic thought, held an uncritical and mystical view of Scripture in contrast to the more historical approach of the

Antiochians. For him scriptural numbers had spiritual meanings, Old Testament prophecy was a specific prediction of Christ as Messiah, and all Scripture was interpreted in the light of the authoritative tradition of the church.¹⁰ His primary interest was in the hidden spiritual meaning of Scripture rather than in the critical problems of the text; in this he differs from Jerome. It might be said, therefore, that Jerome was influenced by the Antiochian tradition, while Augustine was allied more with the Alexandrian school, although theologically he represents the African or Latin tradition of Cyprian and Tertullian.

5. *The Bible in the Middle Ages*

The semihistorical method of the Alexandrian school was evidently premature. It disappeared as the more orthodox authoritarian teachers of Western Christianity molded the thought of the medieval church. According to Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, and Leo the Great, the church has the key to all truth and through its apostolic succession is uniquely qualified to interpret Scripture.

This authoritarian doctrine, simple and therefore assuring to the faithful, gripped the Western world in a thousand years of quiescence, during which time little or no progress in biblical learning occurred within the church. The Bible was subordinated to the church itself as the custodian of truth, and interpretation was made only in the light of ecclesiastical theology. Gregory the Great (540–604), Alcuin (735–804), and Bede (673–735) depended entirely upon ecclesiastical tradition and the patristic writings. Although highly influential in

¹⁰ See Augustine, *Christian Doctrine*.

philosophy and theology, they were without originality and independence when it came to scriptural interpretation.

With the rise of the universities, the Bible was studied in connection with glosses, which were marginal or interlinear interpolations of a theological character. The interpretation of the text itself was usually allegorical. Following the Augustinian method, the medieval teacher interpreted each text of the Scripture in a two-, three-, or fourfold sense. By means of this method the exegete could show that all truth is to be found in the Scripture, hidden behind symbolic forms.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) inclined to the literal method, which gave firmer support to his conception of infallible revelation.¹¹ Since the Scripture is literally inspired and is the complete truth, it is necessary to know exactly what it says. Aquinas, however, made room also for the symbolic sense as something emerging from the primary sense, but his use of allegory was not as elaborate as that of previous exegetes, and he regarded it as purely secondary in value. The allegorical interpretation, he says, tends to confuse the truth of the text. It thus appears that Aquinas achieved a degree of objectivity in his approach to the Scripture and, by doing so, freed exegesis to a certain extent from theological bonds. This contribution, coupled with his rationalism, might be considered one of the important advances made within the church in the Middle Ages.

There were also a few nonconformists who, influenced by medieval Jewish scholars, held to a more or less rational view of the Scripture. One was Johannes Scotus Erigena (833-80), who made a critical study of the text and examined variant readings. His originality, however, is seen in his philosophical rationalism rather than in his Biblical Criticism. A

¹¹ See *Summa Theologiae*, I: 1, 8 and 9.

more important step toward the historical exegesis was the work of Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor (twelfth century), both of whom were strongly in debt to Rashi.¹² Andrew, the more radical of the two, leaned toward the humanistic approach and was uninfluenced by traditional theology. He went so far as to side with Jewish authorities in rendering the Hebrew *almah* (Isa. 7:14) as "young woman" rather than "virgin." Rashi's influence is seen even more emphatically in the writings of Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1340), a Norman Franciscan and professor at the Sorbonne. Nicholas, praised by Luther as an excellent Hebraist, was interested in the textual approach and endeavored to discover, beneath the fog of allegory and symbol, the meaning of the words in their original Hebrew and Greek form.

¹² See p. 300.

Chapter Fourteen

The Rise of Higher Criticism

1. Jewish Precursors of the Historical School

The Higher Criticism, as it came to be known in the nineteenth century, was no sudden development, but simply the steady flow of certain seventeenth- and eighteenth-century streams of thought, which, in turn, were fed by more remote tributaries of the pre-Renaissance period. Not the least important among these tributaries was medieval Jewish learning. Even the Talmudists called attention to scores of discrepancies and contradictions in the Old Testament. It was observed by one that the flood was not a world catastrophe but local in character, by another that Moses and Elijah did not ascend to heaven, and by a third that the birds that fed Elijah were human.

Then, in the ninth century, there was the independent exegete and biblical critic, Al-Balkhi Hivi (Hiwi). His critical study was probably a reflection of the Zoroastrian anti-biblical teaching to which he had been exposed. He gathered together biblical difficulties that had been rationalized by earlier Talmudists, such as the discrepancy between II Kings 8:26, where Ahaziah's reign is assigned to his twenty-second year, and II Chronicles 22:2, where it is assigned to his forty-second year. He anticipated the rationalistic exegesis in his suggestions that the crossing of the Red Sea was made at low tide and that the paleness of Moses' face (Ex. 34:29) was due to a long period of fasting on the mountain.

Hivi's arguments against the divine authorship of the Pentateuch were denounced as heresy by the Karaites, a Jewish sect founded in the eighth century B.C., which professed to follow the Bible to the exclusion of rabbinical traditions and laws. While antagonistic to Jewish sacramental and ecclesiastical laws, the Karaites were highly conservative regarding the so-called Mosaic laws; hence, their opposition to Hivi.

The revolt of Karaism from the Talmudic domination, as well as the Arabic learning of Saadya, which followed on its heels, helped prepare the way for a more systematic rationalism. Gaon ben Joseph Saadya (892-942), head of the Jewish Academy at Sura in Babylonia, translated the Old Testament into Arabic and thereby brought to his interpretation an improved philological apparatus. His rationalistic exegesis was continued in the following century by the Cordovan scholar, Ibn Janah, and by Rabbi Isaac of Toledo. The latter observed that Genesis 36:31 ("before there reigned any king over Israel") could have been written only after the accession of Saul as king, thus implying the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Rashi (1040-1105), another prominent Jewish commentator, held to a strictly literal interpretation of the original Hebrew text.

By far the greatest impetus to the developing critical method coming from medieval Judaism was the work of the prolific Abraham ben Ezra (1092-1167). This fascinating figure — theologian, philosopher, poet, mathematician, and biblical scholar — was the inspiration of Browning's poem, *Rabbi ben Ezra*. In his commentary on the Pentateuch, Ben Ezra rejects allegorism along with the Midrashic interpretation in favor of his own historical and common-sense method. Of verbal inspiration he will have none, and the miraculous plays no significant role so far as he is concerned.

He could not believe that biblical writers anticipated his-

tory. Commenting on Genesis 12:6 ("and the Canaanite was then in the land"), he observed that such a passage was necessarily post-Mosaic in authorship. It was clear to him, in view of the retrospective language used in Genesis regarding the Canaanite period, that the Pentateuch, in its entirety, could not be attributed to Moses. The observation of variant recensions of the Decalogue and linguistic differences within the Pentateuch only confirmed his doubt of Mosaic authorship. Ben Ezra was one of the first to detect a second authorship in Isaiah, a hand that was undoubtedly post-Exilic, for the references to Cyrus as the deliverer of the Jews could hardly have been written by the eighth-century Isaiah. He also ventured the suggestion that the latter part of II Samuel was of different authorship from the first part.

In spite of the spread of Jewish learning in Spain, the age was not ready for a critical approach to the Scripture. Ben Ezra therefore discreetly veiled his statements in ambiguous and cryptic phraseology. His masterly knowledge of Hebrew enabled him to clarify many obscure passages and render the original text more accurately. He was greatly instrumental in spreading Arabic and Jewish learning when learning was really scarce and can be considered an important forerunner of modern Biblical Criticism.¹

2. Interpretation in the Reformation

In the long run, the Reformation, by virtue of its important principle of individual freedom of interpretation, was an added impetus to the rise of Historical Criticism. The philos-

¹ Ben Ezra's rationalism was echoed in the writing of Maimonides (1135-1204), who called into question the historicity of various biblical narratives. See *Guide to the Perplexed* (2nd ed.; London, 1928), pp. 234 ff.

ophy of private judgment, inherent in both the Reformation and modern democracy, has obvious implications for the study of the Bible. This conscious release from ecclesiastical authority precipitated a new and popular interest in the Bible and bore fruit in the historical school of the nineteenth century, when Biblical Criticism was almost exclusively a Protestant movement.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that Luther and Calvin brought to their biblical study free and critical minds. Reformation interpretation was not without its interest in theology. Protestant scholars, in the period immediately following the schism, used the Scripture chiefly as a means of justifying the new faith. It is possible, therefore, to trace the progress of historical criticism as passing from the Jewish scholars of the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century by way of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment rather than by way of the Reformation.

The chief innovation in Biblical Criticism made by the Reformation was its insistence on the independent validity of the Scripture as authority in itself. The Protestant movement effected a shift in the location of religious truth: authority now was vested in the Bible as the Word of God, not in the church. This shift had two results: it created a popular interest in the use of the Bible, but it also made the Bible an external, absolute, and binding authority over men's minds. The latter result has proved inimical to general intellectual progress from the sixteenth century to the twentieth.

Luther was influenced to some extent by Nicholas of Lyra in his literal interpretation, but he occasionally followed Augustine and the Fathers in using the allegorical method. He was well equipped, with his exceptional knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, for the grammatical and historical approach

to the Scripture, but this shows only in connection with his translation of the Bible, where he considered the question of canonicity. He practically excluded from the canon, as far as his translation was concerned, such books as Revelation, Jude, Hebrews, and James. Ecclesiastes, he claimed, could not have come from the hand of Solomon. He recognized the work of redactors and later editors in some of the Old Testament books.

For Luther, historical interest is subordinated to "spiritual" interpretation, which is subjective. The Scripture, as the Word of God, holds the key to salvation, and its message is revealed to the reader by the Holy Spirit. In regarding both the Old and the New Testament as a revelation of Christ, Luther differed little from the early Fathers, and in the field of Biblical Criticism he had little to add to his predecessors. For him, the Psalms and Genesis witnessed Christ, and the prophets spoke in New Testament terms. His attention was given largely to the doctrinal Epistles of Paul, to the neglect of the Synoptic Gospels and the ethics of Jesus. All too often he ignored the historical situation of a passage in extracting from it a theological meaning.

Melanchthon followed Luther's exegetical method in reading the New Testament into the Old, and in using both as the source of Christian doctrine.

The primacy of Scripture reaches its zenith in the writings of John Calvin (1509-64). He rejected unequivocally all forms of allegory. The Bible, he said, contains "all things necessary for salvation," but it can be read only by those who have faith. Since the authors of the Bible were merely the "clerks" of the Holy Spirit and wrote under dictation, it follows that every word of Scripture is literally true as it stands. In throwing aside the allegorical method, Calvin went to the

extreme of literalism, a tendency that characterized all later orthodox Protestantism.

Calvin failed to distinguish between fact and fiction, the poetry of imagination and the prose of history. The Bible was all on one infallible level of inspiration. He speaks of it as a progressive revelation of God's truth but is altogether lacking in historical sense when he interprets the Psalms or Genesis. He saw no difference in principle between the Law and the Prophets. His lack of critical judgment is seen in his statement that the writers of the gospels were in "perfect agreement." Finally, as a dogmatist, Calvin saw in the Scripture just what he wanted to see — his own particular brand of theology, which was clearly Augustinian. Like his predecessors, he used the Old Testament to prove the deity of Christ; to do so, he took each verse out of context and gave it unwarranted meanings.²

The Reformers, in short, whatever else they may have accomplished — and there was much — did not advance the cause of scientific Biblical Criticism to any appreciable degree. While they added to our knowledge of the text through their translations, they were not primarily interested in literary sources, problems of unity, date and authorship, and historical questions. Their concern was theological rather than critical and historical.

The Protestant principle of individual study of the Bible was intended to promote not objective scientific inquiry but religious and theological insight. In contrast to the claims of Catholicism that the church alone possessed the true interpretation of the Scripture and the divine right to mediate that truth to its followers, Luther and Calvin taught that the individual believer himself, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit,

² See *Institutes*, I: 13:9.

could grasp divine truth through reading the Scripture. The Bible, not the church, was the authority for doctrine and religious instruction. The individual did not need the mediation of the church in his apprehension of God's will or his assurance of salvation.

The Reformers, then, merely shifted the basis of authority. In place of ecclesiastical authority they substituted that of the Bible. This shift eventually worked against individual interpretation as the Bible became an external objective authority in doctrinal matters. Protestant theology became a rigid formula, and the Bible became merely an instrument for proving its soundness. Since the Scripture was the infallible Word of God and the source of doctrine, it made little difference who wrote what or why, for every book and every word was of equal weight. Such an atmosphere clearly was not conducive to scientific criticism.

3. The Era of Rationalism

Considering Erasmus (1466–1536) as a Humanist rather than a Reformer, we find in his writings a greater degree of independent criticism than was present in Luther and Calvin. Erasmus' genius lay in the textual field. To him belongs the distinction of preparing the first Greek New Testament. His collection of the best available manuscripts and his exegetical notes accompanying the text helped to set the stage for later textual and literary criticism. Under his critical eye the text of the New Testament was substantially improved. He detected many theological emendations and editorial insertions, such as I John 5:7 and the last twelve verses of Mark. He did not hesitate to place the ethical portions of the New Testa-

ment above the anthropomorphic fables of Genesis. He questioned the canonicity of Hebrews, James, Revelation, II and III John, and II Peter. His exegetical notes accompanying the New Testament were welcomed and were widely used by the leading scholars of Europe. Luther at first leaned rather heavily upon them but later, resenting their humanistic and rationalistic flavor, spurned them.

With Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Isaac de la Peyrere (1594-1676) we come a little closer to the actual beginnings of literary criticism as applied to the Bible. Hobbes was both anti-Protestant and anti-Catholic in his view of the Scripture. As a free-lance philosopher, with no theological axe to grind, he introduced into the stream of critical history a fresh and independent element. He opposed both the Protestant idea of scriptural authority and the Roman Catholic tendency to read the Bible only as subservient to the church and its faith. According to Hobbes, the Bible is not the Word of God; it is the word of some men who knew God better than other men. In other words, he denied the authority of the Bible as conceived both by the Reformers and by the Roman Catholic Church. Among other things, he cited much internal evidence to throw doubt on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.³

La Peyrere was of Jewish extraction, but his family became Protestant. He published two unorthodox treatises, *Praeadmatae* and *Systema Theologicum*. In the first book he argued that, according to the evidence in Genesis, human beings existed before Adam. In the second he continued Hobbes's proof of non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and introduced the rationalistic interpretation. He questioned the miracles of both the Old Testament and the New

³ *Leviathan*, Part 3, chap. 33.

and assigned to natural causes many supposedly supernatural phenomena.

The rationalism of Hobbes and la Peyrere was continued on a more elaborate and systematic scale by Spinoza (1632–77) in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Spinoza was also indebted to ben Ezra, Maimonides, and ben Gerson for his rationalistic views. He began by attacking the traditional use of the Bible as a means of supporting Christian theology. The theologians, he asserted, were interested only in propagating their particular doctrines, to which “they have made Holy Writ conform.” He brushed aside the mysterious and the mystical and approached the Bible as he would any other book — first by a critical examination of the text; then by a historical study of date, composition, authorship, and setting; and finally by ascertaining what the text says, not what he would like it to say. This procedure, as outlined by Spinoza, defines the spirit of modern criticism.

Fearless, unprejudiced, possessing a mind at once mathematical and philosophical, Spinoza cleared away the old structures of both allegory and literalism, then proceeded to lay a new foundation — the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which might well be called the Magna Charta of Biblical Criticism. His contribution to biblical study lies in his anticipation of the two successive stages: Rationalism, or the harmonizing of the Scripture with natural law, and Historical Criticism, which assigns Scripture to its age and setting and does not try to “save” its contents. Today the rationalistic method appears as fallacious as allegory, but it was significant that Spinoza, in the seventeenth century, should make use of the first and at least point the way to the second.

The defect of the rationalistic method is that Scripture is assumed a priori to be truth, that the world of nature is also

truth, and that the latter really determines the meaning of the former. Following this principle, certain interpreters even today reconcile the Red Sea story, or the story of the sun standing still for Joshua, with some unusual but "altogether possible" natural phenomenon. Spinoza, however, did not abuse the rationalistic method. He insisted on the right to refute Scripture where it was contrary to nature, just as he would the Talmud or the Koran.⁴

Spinoza's scientific attitude is most clearly seen in his literary criticism of the Pentateuch, where he acknowledges his debt to ben Ezra. Mosaic authorship is rejected on the basis of anachronisms, such as the iron bedstead mentioned in II Samuel 12:29, 30; of retrospective allusions to sources later than Moses, such as Numbers 21:14;⁵ and of the presence of material that must be dated as late as the Exile. Spinoza points out that the Pentateuch must be seen, along with Joshua and Judges, as the work of editors, culminating with Ezra. He intimates that the Pentateuch was made up of distinct strands or documents that were later edited and observes the evidence of compilation and editorial correction.⁶

Spinoza places the Book of Nehemiah as late as the second century B.C. and the publication of the Book of Psalms in the time of the second temple. Regarding Chronicles, which is dated very late, he expresses surprise that such an unreliable book should be admitted to the canon and the Wisdom of Solomon be excluded. He assigns Proverbs to a post-Exilic date, denies unity to Jeremiah, regards Job as a translation of a gentile poem, and questions the genuineness of Daniel.

Spinoza hesitates to apply his criticism to the New Testa-

⁴ *Cogitata Metaphysica*, 2:8.

⁵ This evidence appeared before Spinoza in the *Systema Theologicum* of La Peyrere, 1655.

⁶ See *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, in loco.

ment because of his lack of Greek, but insists, at any rate, that the apostles and evangelists had no miraculous powers and wrote simply as human beings. With respect to Jesus, he is surprisingly orthodox, even from a dogmatic Christian point of view, although he qualifies the traditional view of the Trinity as held by the Christian church. He shares with ben Ezra a belief in the spiritual rather than the literal or bodily resurrection of Christ and claims Paul as his authority. However, he thinks that the writers of the gospels thought that Christ rose bodily. In view of Spinoza's observation of the editorial or redactional nature of Hebrew literature and his differentiation between the thought of the New Testament writers and that of a later age, it can be truly said that he stands at the threshold of the critical period and did much to give it birth.

It thus appears that the foundation of scientific Biblical Criticism was laid, for the most part, by thinkers outside the church, chiefly Jews. Much of the superstructure also was the work of independent critics, philosophers, and poets.

4. The Birth of the Critical Spirit

The spirit of Literary and Historical Criticism was a product of the eighteenth century; its systematic method was developed in the nineteenth.

In the eighteenth century, men cut loose from tradition and authority. Bacon, Descartes, Locke, and Newton threw Aristotelianism and Scholasticism out the window. The eighteenth-century man did his own thinking; he cared nothing for the Fathers or ecclesiastical theology. Truth had to be tested by reason and experience. The Encyclopedists in France, the Deists in England, and the poets of the *Aufklärung*

in Germany all created a new intellectual climate. The eighteenth century was a second Renaissance, especially in France, where the Enlightenment brought forth the ideas of representative government and popular sovereignty, freedom of contract, separation of church and state, freedom of conscience, civil liberty, belief in social progress, and natural rights.

In this eighteenth-century atmosphere, criticism was born — the application of scientific methods to the textual and literary problems of the Bible. The word “critical” now took on real meaning, as the traditional ideas of infallibility, revelation, and inspiration were cast aside to make room for the objective approach to the Scripture. But whom shall we call the founder of scientific Biblical Criticism — Simon, Astruc, Bentley, Eichhorn, Michaelis, Wettstein, Bengel, Semler? These were the great men associated with the birth of criticism, and they all played an important part.

Richard Simon (1638–1712) has been called the “Father of Biblical Criticism,” but such a tribute exaggerates his contribution and works an injustice upon other eighteenth-century critics. As *one* of the founders of scientific criticism, Simon simply applied Spinoza’s principles to the Old Testament. He ruled out Mosaic authorship for portions of the Pentateuch and asserted that most of the Old Testament in its present form was a product of the post-Exilic period. In other respects, however, he exhibited an uncritical spirit. He operated strictly within the confines of Catholic thought. Truth, he said, has been revealed to the church, and ecclesiastical tradition is supported by the Scripture, which is “infallible and of divine authority, since [it proceeds] immediately from God.”⁷ Alterations, additions, and later redactions of

⁷ *A Critical History of the Old Testament* (London, 1682), p. 1.

the text, he adds, do not in any way detract from its authority. Tradition, in any case, is necessary, as Scripture in itself is neither clear nor self-sufficient.

Further impetus to critical study was given by Richard Bentley (1662–1742), who was the first to apply the principle of internal evidence to ancient writings. The importance of this principle to biblical studies is evident in those portions of the text which display a diversity of literary style, contradictory reports, and anachronisms. Bentley's theory of literary criticism led to the still more important formulations of Jean Astruc (1684–1766), a Roman Catholic physician, who noted in Genesis a variety of styles inconsistent with unity of authorship. He saw that there were two distinct names used for deity — Elohim and Yahweh — and that these two names belonged to two different accounts of the same events; namely, the Creation and Flood accounts. This observation pointed to two ancient sources used by the author of Genesis, who, in Astruc's mind, was Moses. In that discovery we can recognize the inspiration for the later documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch.

The historical method made great headway in the work of Johann Semler (1725–91), the "Father of German Rationalism." In his *Treatise on the Free Investigation of the Canon* he broke the static and immutable view of the Scripture by showing that the formation of the canon was a purely human process, an historical growth in which all the churches differed for several centuries regarding the authoritative list of books. He then attacked the traditional theory of inspiration, which held that everything in the Bible was equally inspired and valuable. He pointed out differences in religious worth within the New Testament canon and insisted that the Scripture must be studied as any other product of the human mind. That meant that one should study the text in the light

of its intrinsic meaning, unprejudiced by dogma. The reader must take into account the historical setting of a book, the cultural background of the writer, and the literary relationships of the book with other books.

In line with Semler in the historico-literary approach, but less original, were Johann Ernesti (1707–81), Johann Eichhorn (1752–1827), and Johann Michaelis (1717–91). The two greatest exegetical influences in the eighteenth century were the *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* of Johann Bengel (1687–1752) and the *Prolegomena ad Novi Testamenti* of Johann Wettstein (1693–1754).

The eighteenth century produced two other major critics, who were from the literary field. The first was Gotthold Lessing (1729–81), who startled the world with his questioning of the miracles of the New Testament. He also took a less bibliocentric view of religion, which was a long overdue criticism of Protestantism. Christianity as a religion, he writes, existed before the New Testament was written or even dreamed of. The Christian gospel does not depend on the New Testament writings for its validity; in fact, there is a vast difference between the religion of Jesus and that of the apostles. There is no basis in the teachings of Jesus for either the trinitarian formula or the sacraments of the church.⁸

Johann Herder (1744–1803) advanced the idea of Semler that the Bible is the work of men and should be read as such. His chief interest was in the Hebrew poetry as an interpretation of both nature and human nature. He regarded the early chapters of Genesis as poetry rather than history and took the same view of the Book of Jonah.

The rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in brief, undermined the authority of dogma, weakened

⁸ *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Karl K. F. Lachmann, pp. 99 ff.

the orthodox doctrine of inspiration, and introduced the historical and literary method in criticism — a process that reached its peak in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

5. *The Scientific Age*

The intellectual progress of the nineteenth century, one might say, was momentous. The study of archaeology, the study of comparative religion and the history of religion, the theory of evolution, the empirical emphasis in philosophy, and paleography — all occurring in the mid-nineteenth century — had, in every instance, a direct bearing on the development of scientific Biblical Criticism. Darwin's theory of organic evolution completely undermined the traditional world view and demanded a new formulation of theology, philosophy, ethics, anthropology, and psychology. Men now saw that the world is not fixed, that nature in all its forms changes constantly. Absolutism yielded to relativism, dogma to scientific verification. Belief in static revelation and the infallibility of Scripture, therefore, was no longer tenable.

The breakdown of scriptural authority, prefigured by eighteenth-century rationalism, which had substituted reason for revelation, was now completed by the Higher Criticism of the nineteenth century. The character of Jesus and moral values became the authoritative norm, rather than the Bible per se. The facts of history replaced the assumptions of dogma. Jesus' ethics became more important for the study of the New Testament than his miraculous activities. Nothing was too sacred for investigation. Instead of a transcendent God, above and apart from the world, theologians now thought in terms of divine immanence, the world as process,

and God as an immanent force at work, an "infinite and eternal energy."

The scientific point of view made itself felt in the field of biblical literature through the idea of evolution, the use of the inductive and empirical method, and the genetic or developmental conception of religious history. Students of the Bible began, for the first time, to speak of the growth of the idea of God in the Bible, the evolution of early Christianity, progressive revelation as seen in the Scripture, and the growth of the canon.

With the discovery of pre-Hebrew documents, the dependence of Old Testament writers upon Babylonian traditions and laws was inferred from the parallels in the earlier literature of Assyria and Babylonia. Babylonian tablets from 2000 B.C. began to pour into the British Museum to be deciphered: they carried Creation stories, Flood accounts, and other myths, which duplicated passages in Genesis. Persian eschatology and Egyptian wisdom were seen as influencing the later books of the Old Testament. The mystery religions of the Graeco-Roman world were found to have influenced the thought-forms and practices of Pauline Christianity. Older and more trustworthy manuscripts of biblical documents were discovered, which revolutionized the study of the text.

Progressive scholars came to see that it was unsound to limit religious inspiration to the contents of the canonical books of the Bible, that historical inquiry must be concerned with an organic process, not a book. It was now clear that no religion can be properly understood without a knowledge of its sources and the influences affecting its early growth. The Hebrew-Christian religion must be studied in the light of archaeological backgrounds in the Near East and, beyond

those backgrounds, in primitive religion. The Bible itself must be seen as a cultural growth in the course of history, not as an end in itself, complete and self-sufficient. It could not be studied in a vacuum; it required an historical context. The teachings of Jesus, for example, had to be studied against the background of Jewish law and history. Paul's letters could not be dissociated from the pagan religions of the first century. The Fourth Gospel could only be understood in connection with the writings of Philo.

This genetic point of view helped to usher in the scientific study of Scripture known as Historical or Higher Criticism, which, by 1870, attained a systematic form.

The Dominance of Germany

Professional criticism arose not in England, although the scientific temper was there most evident, or in France, but in Germany. Throughout the nineteenth century, the critics of importance were, for the most part, professors in German universities.

One reason for this dominance was that the German universities nourished the scientific spirit. In France, scientific criticism could make itself felt only in spite of the Roman Catholic Church, which defended the older dogmatic interpretation and which had an authoritative grip on scholarship. The exceptional scholars — Renan, Duschesne, Loisy — who had the courage to break through to an independent position, were either excommunicated or condemned. In England, the universities were held down by the conservative Anglican church, and the outstanding English scholars were the independent literary or ecclesiastical figures. In Germany, however, biblical research became a precise discipline under the auspices of the universities rather than the church. Biblical

Criticism was conducted along the same scientific lines as any other discipline, and was untouched by a conservative church.

The controlling principles of Historical Criticism were developed in connection with the analysis of two major problems — those of the Pentateuch and the Synoptic Gospels — although there were many other critical studies, involving such questions as the authorship and date of all the books in the Bible (especially Isaiah), the life and personality of Jesus, and the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles.

New Testament Criticism

The first major critic of the nineteenth century was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), who represents a threefold transition: from the rationalistic to the purely historical position, from a preoccupation with the Old Testament to the field of New Testament study, and from a bibliocentric to a Christocentric emphasis. The normative authority for him was Christ, not the Bible. This transfer of interest marks the beginning of both liberal theology and modern Historical Criticism.⁹ With Schleiermacher, biblical research turns to the New Testament and for a half-century remains there.

As the most influential German theologian in the first half of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher can be considered the founder of the liberal school, represented later by such eminent theologians as Ritschl, Bleek, Neander, Tholuck, Dorner, Lotze, Harnack, Loofs, and Troeltsch. The Schleiermacher-Ritschlian school was known as the “mediating” school because it corrected and combined previous tendencies in a higher synthesis, defined the evangelical faith as resting on experience rather than dogma, and regarded religion pri-

⁹ See *Reden über die Religion* (Berlin, 1799).

marily as an inward feeling rather than a prescribed code of ethics or a superimposed body of doctrine. This combination of the critical spirit of interpretation with a personal experiential faith attracted American scholars, who, for a half-century, flocked to Berlin and other German centers of learning. In the fields of theology, church history, and criticism, therefore, Schleiermacher and his followers molded American thinking more than any other one force.

Schleiermacher tended to minimize the importance of doctrine and to relegate the miraculous element in the New Testament to a nonessential position. He rejected the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus as having no significance and insisted that the crux of New Testament criticism, as of Christianity itself, is "the historical Christ."¹⁰ Schleiermacher's importance lies in his integration of science and religion, which had been divorced in the eighteenth century. He showed that if religion is based, not on fourth-century dogmas, biblical cosmology, or ecclesiastical authority, but on a valid emotional experience and moral values, there can be no real conflict between science and religion.

The next great name in nineteenth-century criticism is that of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), founder of the Tübingen school. The source of Baur's system of interpretation is the philosophy of Hegel, who fashioned an evolutionary or dialectical explanation of history. All history, he said, proceeds from thesis (the status quo or traditional pattern) to antithesis (the conflict produced by an opposing force) to synthesis (the higher resultant arising from the impact of the first two forces).

Baur used this Hegelian dialectic to explain the history of early Christianity and the New Testament writings. From

¹⁰ *Leben Jesu* (1864) (posthumous).

the serious conflict of Petrine-Jewish Christianity (thesis) with Pauline-gentile Christianity (antithesis) — a conflict of which there can be no historical doubt — emerged early Catholic Christianity (synthesis). The New Testament books are not independent ends in themselves but part of a tendency or trend, representing certain stages through which Christianity was passing. The Pastoral Epistles, for example, are the emergent result of the Petrine-Pauline conflict. Baur's use of the Hegelian formula gave rise to the Tübingen school and was known as the *Tendenz* theory.¹¹ His investigations led to the rejection of the Pastoral Epistles as non-Pauline; he accepted only Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians as coming from Paul.

Baur has received more than his share of criticism. It must be admitted that he applied the *Tendenz* theory to the New Testament canon in a sweeping manner and followed a deductive method in doing so, but he did shake men's minds loose from the pious and static conception of the Apostolic Age that all was peace and unity, and he gave a greater impulse to the historical method. The Rationalism of the eighteenth century, continued to some extent by Schleiermacher but more so by Paulus, was now at an end.

The third and perhaps the most powerful influence in New Testament scholarship was the *Life of Jesus* by David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74), a book that accomplished the spade work in Synoptic criticism and made all New Testament critics for the following century its debtor.¹² It had become apparent from the writings of de Wette that a biography of Jesus, in the true meaning of the term, was impos-

¹¹ See *Die Sogenannte Pastoral briefe* (1835); *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi* (Stuttgart, 1845); *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* (Tübingen, 1847).

¹² *Leben Jesu* (1835).

sible, owing to the paucity of information and absence of documentary material. Nevertheless, as a result of Strauss's work, the trend was established, and the century that followed produced thousands of lives of Jesus. As a pupil of Baur, Strauss appreciated the successive environmental influences that went into the making of the gospels. He was, in fact, the first to differentiate clearly between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. He was one of the first to undertake a study of the interrelationship of the first three gospels — a study from which the Two-Source theory later emerged.¹⁸

Popular reaction to Strauss's *Life of Jesus* was decidedly unfavorable. The public (and also his colleagues) viewed with alarm his statement that Jesus was "a wise man" theologized by myth into a supernatural magician. Strauss's humanistic or liberal representation of Jesus caused a furore at that time, but many of his findings were soon taken for granted among critics.

Approaching the gospel records with no presuppositions, Strauss recognized the mythical or legendary character of most of the gospel, including all accounts of Jesus' life before his baptism and after his death. He came to this "mythical theory" by way of the Hegelian dialectic — the mythical theory being the synthesis developing from the supernaturalistic (thesis) and the naturalistic or rationalistic (antithesis). Hence the modern view, which rejects both miraculous revelation and the naturalistic explanation of supposedly miraculous events and recognizes that all ancient writings — including the Bible — contain legendary growths, which are heightened by the passage of time. The difference between

¹⁸ For a discussion of the Synoptic Problem see pp. 155-164 ff. For the Two-Source theory, see especially pp. 164-168. The Two-Source theory was developed in its representative form by Heinrich Holtzmann and Bernhard Weiss.

the Synoptic tradition and the Johannine tradition is a case in point. Strauss rejected the Fourth Gospel as having no historical value. In his earlier work he interpreted the self-consciousness of Jesus in terms of Jewish eschatology: Jesus' role in his own mind was Messianic.¹⁴ In his later *Life of Jesus* (1864), however, he modified his eschatological views.

The priority of Mark and the Two-Source theory were given a more systematic argument by Christian H. Weisse, who continued the investigations of Strauss, and Christian G. Wilke. The work of these two critics was in turn the point of departure for the extended research of Bruno Bauer (1809–82), whose skeptical treatment anticipated the later “Christ-Myth school” of Drews. Bauer's rejection of the gospel narratives as historically unreliable was shared by an earlier critic, H. S. Reimarus (1694–1768). Both regarded the figure of Christ as an idealization concocted by the evangelists. The skeptical or imaginative view of Jesus found a representative in France in Ernest Renan (1823–90), whose romantic *La Vie de Jésus* (1863) was, by comparison, somewhat superficial in scholarship, but exceedingly popular and charming.

German New Testament scholarship continued to occupy itself with the person of Jesus, the Synoptic Problem, and the formation of the New Testament. In the writings of Daniel Schenkel, Karl Weizsäcker, Heinrich Holtzmann, Karl T. Keim, Adolf Hilgenfeld, Otto Pfleiderer, Karl B. Hase, Willibald Beyschlag, Bernhard Weiss, and Adolf Jülicher — the creators of the so-called “liberal” school — there was an increasing tendency to reject the eschatological view of Jesus and to present him as a Messiah of a moral and spiritual reform, preaching the inward nature of the Kingdom. The

¹⁴ See my article in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1929, XLVIII, 149–61.

use of the Synoptics rather than the Fourth Gospel in reconstructing the life of Jesus became axiomatic with Weizsäcker and Holtzmann. Heinrich Holtzmann (1832-1910) and Bernhard Weiss (1827-1918) gave the Markan hypothesis a more secure footing and did much to establish the Two-Source theory of the Synoptics.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century, the eschatological question was revived. Otherwise, there was a general advance in the liberal interpretation of the New Testament as a whole. Johannes Weiss, in his *Preaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God* (1892), maintained an exclusively Messianic and apocalyptic interpretation of Jesus, a view opposed by Wilhelm Bousset (1865-1920), who related Jesus' life and teachings to the present world of the spirit and not to the cataclysmic ending of the world. The Kingdom of God is the realization of God's will in the heart of the individual here and now: "The Kingdom of God is within you."

Theologically, Bousset belonged to the then rapidly rising *Religionsgeschichtliche* school, the left wing of the historical school, which stressed the importance of environmental influences in the growth of early Christianity. Another member of this group was William Wrede (1859-1906), who viewed the New Testament from the standpoint of the history of religion rather than theologically. With him there is no such thing as "biblical theology." Wrede's contribution was in his clarification of the differences between the Johannine and Synoptic traditions and in his analysis of the Jesus-Paul problem. Here he maintained that Paul effected a complete break with the original Christian community and founded a new gentile Christianity based on his own thinking. Wrede strenuously opposed the eschatological interpretation of Jo-

hannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. Wrede's position on eschatology was supported by Otto Pfleiderer (1839-1908), a follower of Baur. His chief investigations were in the Apostolic Age, where Karl von Weizsäcker (1822-99) excelled. Not the least important product of the German schools of criticism was the publication of the first great commentaries and numerous introductions.

The Historical Criticism of the nineteenth century was confined almost exclusively to Germany. German scholars, at any rate, can be credited with the development of the historical method in its definitive form. The influence of German scholarship began to be felt in England early in the century in the work of Coleridge (1772-1834), who rejected outright the traditional idea of revelation and mechanical inspiration. His criterion was that whatever calls up the best that is in you is inspiration. The test of inspiration is experience. This was a thoroughly modern idea.

Coleridge's view of the Scripture as strictly a product of human insight was shared by Thomas Arnold and Bishop John W. Colenso. Colenso inclined toward the radical wing of the German school and came into conflict with the church.¹⁵ The historical method gained ground in England with the semitechnical writings of Matthew Arnold, who unequivocally rejected both the orthodox view of inspiration and the miraculous element in the Bible; with the investigations of Henry H. Milman in the history of early Christianity; and with the broad-church views of John F. D. Maurice, Frederick W. Robertson, Charles Kingsley, and Frederic W. Farrar.

¹⁵ The heresy trial of Bishop Colenso in England was paralleled at the end of the century by the dismissal in the United States of Charles A. Briggs and Henry Preserved Smith by the Presbyterian church and Hinckley G. Mitchell by the Methodist church.

Old Testament Criticism

We now turn to the Old Testament field, where the problem of the Pentateuch dominated the scene. The Documentary theory had been suggested and partially developed by Astruc, Eichhorn, de Wette, and Ilgen. In 1853 Hüpfield made a fresh attack on the problem and demonstrated the presence of three distinct authors in Genesis: two using the term "Elohim" for God, and the third, "Yahweh." He identified one of the Elohist documents as the Priestly Code and regarded it, erroneously, as the earliest of the documents. Karl Graf, following the earlier findings of Reuss, established the post-Exilic dating of P (*ca.* 500 B.C.) and was supported in this by Kuenen, a Dutch scholar.

To this preliminary research was added the finishing touch of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), the most famous Old Testament scholar of the century.¹⁶ He observed that three strands ran through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and that Deuteronomy represented a fourth and independent authorship. He concluded that one author could not be responsible for the parallel, but contradictory, accounts of the Creation and the Flood or for the variety of literary styles. Laws and customs from different periods in history stood side by side, clearly indicative of several chronological strata. It became evident that Deuteronomy reflected a seventh-century situation and was written in the light of the eighth-century prophets. He held that the four documents, J (850 B.C.), E (750 B.C.), D (621 B.C.), and P (500 B.C.),

¹⁶ See *Israelische und Jüdische Geschichte* (3rd ed.; Gutersloh, 1897) (Eng. trans., *Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah* [London, 1891]); also *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (3rd ed.; Berlin, 1886) (Eng. trans., *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* [Edinburgh, 1885]).

were combined in the post-Exilic period and later called the Torah.

Wellhausen's work produced a turning point in the history of Old Testament criticism. Applying the Hegelian idea to Hebrew history, he showed that the canonical order of Old Testament books is just the reverse of the actual facts of Hebrew history. The Law, in other words, was not the beginning but, in its present form at least, an end result. The editing of the Pentateuch was a post-Exilic movement, part of the restoration. After Wellhausen, the history of Israel was studied from an evolutionary or dialectic standpoint — polytheistic in the preprophetic period, henotheistic in the prophetic era, and monotheistic in the post-Exilic restoration. The Graf-Wellhausen theory, as it came to be known, has, with some minor modifications, held the field to the present day.

The historical method was then applied to other sections of the Old Testament. Critical work on the Prophets was done by George Adam Smith, W. Robertson Smith, and Bernhard Duhm. The earlier contention that the Book of Isaiah was composite in authorship was now given more systematic confirmation. In the introductions and commentaries of Marti, Duhm, Cornill, Ewald, Reuss, Fürst, Geiger, Wildboer, Kautzsch, and Delitzsch, the Psalms and Wisdom literature were assigned to the late post-Exilic period, new studies in Hebrew chronology and canon were made, and archaeological discoveries in Mesopotamia were used to throw light on the early Hebrew documents. Wilhelm Gesenius (1776–1842) was responsible for the great advance in the modern study of Hebrew grammar and textual analysis. Zecharias Frankel (1801–75), founder of the historical school of

modern Judaism, applied the critical method to biblical literature in his monumental work on the Septuagint and in his study of the influence of Talmudic exegesis on the Alexandrian School. Abraham Geiger (1810-74), Jewish theologian and authority on Jewish history and institutions, is known for his critical study of the Torah and the Talmud.

Our review of the nineteenth century comes to a climactic conclusion with Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), whose productive career spans the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. Following in the tradition of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, Harnack became at once the leading representative of the liberal school and without doubt the most influential theologian at the turn of the century, exerting a profound influence on liberal Protestant thought throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The instrument that did most to mold the typical "modernist" theology was *Das Wesen des Christentums*, a series of extracurricular lectures at the University of Berlin in 1899-1900.¹⁷ These sixteen lectures, delivered to an audience of almost a thousand students, became the basis of liberal American thought in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

In these lectures Harnack distinguished clearly between dogmatic Christianity and the gospel of Jesus, between the religion of Jesus and the religion about Jesus. The essence of Christianity, he said, is the teaching of Jesus — not the dualism of Paul, the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, the legalism of Latin Christianity, the asceticism of the Eastern church, or ecclesiastical tradition in general. There is, in other words, a difference between Jesus and the historic church. To define Christianity, we must get back to the basic teachings of Jesus,

¹⁷ Eng. trans., *What Is Christianity?* (New York, 1901).

which are, in essence, the fatherhood of God and the divine worth of the human personality as a child of God. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the individual soul. Salvation lies in the mental attitude of the individual, in an internal experience that effects a change or deliverance, not in any outward compulsion.

Harnack's chief field of concentration was the Apostolic Age and the ante-Nicene period. His theory was that the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church of the year 200 is not explained by the internal history of the early church alone. Nor can it be explained by the Tübingen theory, which saw Catholic Christianity emerging as a synthesis of the Petrine-Pauline conflict. The only adequate explanation must include non-Christian influences exerted upon the growing church.

The character of the early church, Harnack declared, was influenced specifically by Greek thought and practice. The Hellenization of Christianity started as early as Paul's campaigns and produced a permanent change, theologically and sacramentally. Christianity, in its early growth, was syncretistic and must be studied as developmental, not as a static deposit, immune to its milieu. Bruno Bauer and Edwin Hatch had previously suggested the possibility of Greek influences in early Christianity, but it was Harnack who worked out in detail the theory of Hellenization and religious syncretism.¹⁸

Some of Harnack's most significant work was done in the

¹⁸ See *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*. (Leipzig: 1902): Eng. trans. by James Moffatt, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* [2nd ed.; New York, 1908]; *Dogmengeschichte* (Berlin, 1886) (Eng. trans. by N. Buchanan, *History of Dogma* [Boston, 1895]); *The Date of Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels* (New York, 1911); *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York, 1909).

history of the canon and the making of the New Testament.¹⁹ While some of his theories were later criticized as extreme, Adolf Harnack still stands as the most towering theological figure of prewar German criticism and as the “prince of church historians.”

¹⁹ See *The Origin of the New Testament*, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York, 1925); also *Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200* (1889).

Chapter Fifteen

Twentieth-Century Interpretation

1. Christological Studies

Our task in this chapter will be to trace the principal paths taken by Old and New Testament criticism in the first half of the twentieth century and to point out trends in interpretation current at the beginning of the second half of the century. Biblical Criticism during the first two or three decades of this century was occupied with the consolidation of previous ground gained, the extension of the principles of the historical school along the lines established in the nineteenth century, and also the modification or correction of theories previously held.

One of the most controversial issues bridging the two centuries was the Christological problem, dealing with the historicity and identity of Jesus, his concept of himself, and the nature of his message. The liberal school of Bousset, Harnack, and Wernle had emphasized the Jesus of history. He was first and foremost a human being, a historical personage, whose divine character is appreciated only in the light of an intense moral struggle on the human plane. He preached a religion of fellowship with God the Father; his Kingdom was the achievement of God's will on this earth and in the lives of individuals.

In contrast to the view of the liberal school was the Christ-Myth theory of radical criticism, current in the first

decade of the century. Mythical theories about Jesus and the origin of Christianity had appeared from time to time, but the position of the radical school was given its definitive form by Arthur Drews of Karlsruhe.¹ He maintained that Jesus never actually lived but was an imaginary Jewish Messianic figure, an incarnated God-man, whom Paul elevated to the plane of divinity as a redeemer-saviour and around whom Paul built a cult.

The Christ-Myth problem stirred up popular debates throughout Germany, and refutation was not long in coming from such representatives of the liberal school as Harnack, Jülicher, von Soden, Weinel, Johannes Weiss, and Clemen. These scholars pointed out that the historical life of Jesus is supported by the Pauline letters, the Synoptic Gospels, and the Apostolic Fathers. Reference to Jesus on the part of Roman historians was hardly to be expected in view of the obscurity and remoteness of Judea, but extra-biblical evidence for the historicity of Jesus was found in the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, and Lucian. Josephus and the Talmud also mentioned Jesus.

If the historicity of Jesus cannot be proved, neither can the nonhistoricity be proved.² In the final analysis the question is gratuitous, for, whether or not Jesus ever lived, we still have to account for the Sermon on the Mount and the parables. If Jesus did not exist, somebody else is responsible for these unparalleled teachings. Someone provided the impetus for the Christian movement; if not Jesus, then the equivalent of Jesus. We cannot ignore the personal equation in history.

Another focal point of scholarly debate at the turn of the

¹ *Die Christusmythe* (Jena, 1909).

² The outstanding American coverage of this problem is in S. J. Case, *The Historicity of Jesus* (Chicago, 1912). See also M. Goguel, *Jesus: Myth or History?*, trans. F. Stephens (New York, 1926).

century was the eschatological question. Johannes Weiss in 1892 had argued that Jesus, as an apocalypticist, preached the near end of the world and regarded himself as the Messiah who would reign in the new era to be established either in his lifetime or later. This purely eschatological point of view was opposed by Harnack, Bousset, and Wrede, who interpreted Jesus as an ethical reformer and the Kingdom as the rule of God in the lives of people here and now. The champion of thoroughgoing eschatology was Albert Schweitzer, who was strongly opposed to the liberal school: ³

We modern theologians are too proud of our historical method, too proud of our historical Jesus, too confident in our belief in the spiritual gains which our historical theology can bring to the world. . . . We must be prepared to find that the historical knowledge of the personality and life of Jesus will not be a help, but perhaps even an offense to religion. . . . That which is eternal in the words of Jesus is due to the very fact that they are based on the eschatological world-view, and contain the expression of a mind for which the contemporary world with its historical and social circumstances no longer had any existence.⁴

For Schweitzer, Jesus was not the ethical teacher but the transcendent spiritual Messiah, a mystical Christ. The eschatological interest is central in the gospels, which are to be studied not objectively but as an inspiration to faith. Jesus was concerned with the imminent end of the world rather than with moral values and the social ethic; his teachings were only an "interim ethic," a "temporary way of living" for those who waited for the end of the world.

To this extreme view some liberal critics replied by disclaiming any eschatology in Jesus' self-consciousness and

■ *Das Messianitäts und Leidensgeheimnis* (Tübingen, 1901); *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (Tübingen, 1906) (Eng. trans., *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* [London, 1910]).

⁴ *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 398 ff.

teaching; others declared it was present but subsidiary to his ethical philosophy; still others thought it was a product of the later church tradition that became a part of the gospels. M. S. Enslin, an influential contemporary critic in the liberal school, has recently confessed to being — at least as far as early Christianity is concerned — an eschatologist. He criticizes as fallacious the tendency to modernize Jesus and the assertion by many critics that Jesus was not understood by his contemporaries. Enslin claims that Jesus was clearly understood and that his message was eschatological, although he did not necessarily see himself as the apocalyptic "Son of Man."⁵

The eschatological problem has been a basic factor in New Testament study throughout the first half of this century. Today practically all critics agree that the eschatological element is present in the gospels. The Enochian term "Son of Man" has an apocalyptic connotation. Schweitzer's thoroughgoing eschatology dovetailed nicely with the current neo-orthodox emphasis on crisis and despair. But neither as a world view nor as a standard of morality does it carry the weight of the religion of prophetism.

The natural reaction to the otherworldly view of Jesus and his message was the Social-Gospel school. The eschatologists said that Jesus had no interest in making the world better; he was interested only in its cataclysmic end. In that case, there is no permanent value in his teachings; they were only an interim stopgap. Strongly contrasted to this view was a school of thought, a product of liberal criticism, which emphasized the Social Gospel. The advocates of this view saw in the teachings of Jesus a practical program of social action. The Kingdom of God was the achievement of moral values in society.

⁵ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 75, Pt. 1, pp. 19-26.

For these critics, the teachings of the prophets and Jesus represented the really permanent element in the Bible. Social reform was the end of religion, not orthodox theology or passive mysticism. Such a view coincided with the pragmatism of William James and the pioneer spirit of the New World. After two world wars and an economic depression, the Social Gospel went out of fashion, as Neo-Orthodoxy, reflecting the pessimism and despair of Europe, reverted to the Calvinistic emphasis on sin, corruption, and divine grace. At mid-century, a reaction to Barthianism and Neo-Calvinism is noticeable.

These pendulum swings should warn us of the dangers of subjectivism in the interpretation of Jesus and his message. There is a Christ of faith as well as a Jesus of history; there is an eschatological element in the gospels as well as a social and ethical gospel; but whoever or whatever Jesus was, he must be kept, for purpose of interpretation, in his historical setting.⁶

2. *History of the Gospel Tradition*

Another prominent area of concentration in the early years of the century was that of the origin of the gospels and their interrelationships. The Two-Source theory retained its popularity with minor modifications. B. H. Streeter proposed the Four-Source theory, which says that in addition to Mark and Q (the Logia), Matthew and Luke had access to independent local sources, M and L respectively. Streeter and others have suggested that there was a Proto-Luke (a

⁶ See H. J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (New York, 1937).

combination of L and Q), which was later to produce the present Luke.⁷

Greater attention, however, has been given to the question of oral tradition. At this point Form Criticism entered, presumably as a corrective of the purely literary method. Form Criticism was born in the period of the First World War and, like Neo-Orthodoxy, to which it seems to be indirectly related, is a reflection of the postwar *Zeitgeist*. It is also related to the socio-environmental approach of the same period. It is chiefly concerned with the growth of tradition in the life of the early church (30–70 A.D.), the cultic use of the gospel tradition, and the relation of the oral tradition to the life and thought of the early Christian community before the formation of the present gospels.

The initial work in the application of Form Criticism to the gospels was done by Martin Dibelius, Karl L. Schmidt, and Rudolf Bultmann.⁸ These scholars, and those who followed, recognized the existence of legends, sayings, parables, texts, and independent stories about Jesus. These types of tradition — called “forms” — were preserved by the early Christians, used in their services of worship, and transmitted orally as independent units (*pericopae*) in the various communities. The early church used these oral sayings and stories for apologetic, homiletic, and didactic purposes. From the present gospels, which represent an artificial editing of these

⁷ See B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels, A Study of Origins* (New York, 1925); B. S. Easton, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York, 1926); G. D. Burton, *Some Principles of Literary Criticism and their Application to the Synoptic Problem* (Chicago, 1904).

⁸ See Martin Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen, 1919); K. L. Schmidt, *Die Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin, 1919); Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien* (Göttingen, 1925).

earlier forms, the critic tries to reconstruct the original forms in their life-situation (*Sitz im Leben*).

Form Criticism was a reaction to the literary method, which was not sufficiently concerned with the life and thought of the early church. In emphasizing the life-situation, the Form critics swung to an extreme position. Their preoccupation with the theological process of the early Christian community caused them to neglect the historic person of Jesus. Also, their claims to objective classification of the stories existing in the tradition are now seen to be exaggerated. Schmidt's rejection of the established Markan theory and Bultmann's assertion that nothing can be known about the Jesus of history did not help the cause in England and America. Recent appraisal shows that the method was entirely too subjective and pretentious.⁹

In America the historico-literary method soon reasserted itself. E. F. Scott restored balance to Synoptic criticism by recovering Jesus as a historical figure and a teacher of ethics and by calling attention to the Jewish backgrounds and Hellenistic influences in early Christianity.¹⁰ Shirley Jackson Case, the leading American representative of the socio-historical school, related the gospel tradition to its milieu and described early Christianity as a developmental movement rather than a *sui generis* deposit, a growing organism influenced by its religious and cultural environment rather than

⁹ Form Criticism came to the attention of American scholars largely through the writings of Burton S. Easton and Frederick C. Grant. See B. S. Easton, *The Gospel Before the Gospels* (New York, 1928); F. C. Grant, *Form Criticism* (New York, 1934). For critical appraisals of this method see E. F. Scott, *The Validity of the Gospel Record* (New York, 1938); A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1951).

¹⁰ *The Gospel and Its Tributaries* (Edinburgh, 1928); *The Ethical Teachings of Jesus* (New York, 1925); *The New Testament Today* (New York, 1921).

"a divine insert into history." The same genetic tendency is seen in his treatment of Jesus, where he traces the changing conception of Jesus' identity through the first century and then on through the entire history of Christianity.¹¹

The Aramaic origin of the gospels was another question that engaged the minds of the critics in the first half of this century. Most scholars today agree that Jesus spoke Aramaic, a dialect of the ancient Hebrew, and that the Koiné Greek of the gospels is a Semitized Greek that contained the Aramaic idiom and that shows signs of translation from Aramaic originals. From this point on there is disagreement.

The most prominent name connected with the earlier research in the Aramaic problem is that of Gustaf Dalman. He made modern scholars conscious of the Aramaic background of the Synoptic Gospels and the Aramaic language that Jesus used. Further than that he did not go.¹²

The most extreme position was taken by C. C. Torrey of Yale, who maintained that all four gospels were originally written in Aramaic before 50 A.D. Such a view obviously rules out the oral-tradition theory and holds that the sayings of Jesus and the narrative material concerning his life took written form in Aramaic immediately after his death and that the present gospels are Greek translations of the original Aramaic complete gospels. All unintelligible or difficult passages in the Greek are seen as mistranslations of the Aramaic. Torrey, therefore, corrected the English translation to conform to what he supposed was the original Aramaic word. This could only be done with certainty if he had con-

¹¹ *The Evolution of Early Christianity* (Chicago, 1914); *Jesus Through the Centuries* (Chicago, 1932); *Jesus, a New Biography* (Chicago, 1927); *The Social Origins of Christianity* (Chicago, 1923); *Experience with the Supernatural in Early Christian Times* (New York, 1929).

¹² *The Words of Jesus* (New York, 1902).

temporary documentary evidence for the meaning of the Aramaic words in question. More often than not, that evidence was lacking.¹³

The middle ground was taken by Matthew Black, who concluded that all we can say is that there was an Aramaic source for the sayings of Jesus, written or oral.¹⁴ Most present-day scholars are in agreement with this conclusion.

Recent research in the Synoptic Gospels has studied them not so much as historical documents but as religious testimony or cultic forms. This shift of emphasis from "the quest of the historical Jesus" to the appreciation of the gospels as witness to "the revelation of God" is pointed out by C. H. Dodd, who seems to think that we are through with the historical approach.¹⁵

Our brief survey of research in the gospels would be incomplete without mention of the significant contribution of Adolf Deissmann in his analysis of the Koiné Greek of the New Testament. The discovery of first-century papyri and ostraca containing words used by Jesus shed new light on their meaning. Deissmann demonstrated the popular (common) character of the Koiné Greek, and his papyri findings necessitated numerous changes in the English renderings.¹⁶ Also of critical importance was the work of H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck in establishing the rabbinic parallels to Jesus' teachings.¹⁷ The Jewishness of Jesus' ideology and vocabu-

¹³ *The Four Gospels* (London, 1933); *Our Translated Gospels* (New York, 1936); *Documents of the Primitive Church* (New York, 1941).

¹⁴ *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford, 1946).

¹⁵ *History and the Gospel* (New York, 1938).

¹⁶ See — *Licht vom Osten* (Tübingen, 1908) (Eng. trans. by L. R. M. Strachan, *Light from the Ancient East* [London, 1910]).

¹⁷ *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich, 1922-28).

lary had previously received attention in the writings of Claude Montefiore, Israel Abrahams, and Gerald Friedlander.¹⁸

3. *Pauline Letters*

In the first quarter of the century much critical thought was given to Paul — his theology, his letters, and his permanent influence on Christianity.¹⁹ The Hellenization theory, suggested by Harnack, became popular through the writings of Reitzenstein, Bousset, Lake, Heitmüller, Angus, and Dieterich.²⁰ By citing parallels in the mystery cults, by calling attention to Paul's emphasis on the rites of the sacramental meal and baptism, and by quoting Paul's use of terms found in the mystery cults, these critics made much of the paganizing of early Christianity under Paul. Some, in fact, regarded early Christianity as a soteriological mystery religion, similar to Mithraism, its chief competitor.

That Paul's mysticism and sacramentalism show an affinity to the cults, there can be no doubt, but analogies and parallels do not necessarily imply the transformation of a Jewish religion into a pagan rite. Later criticism tended to

¹⁸ See C. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels* (London, 1910); I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1917, 1924); G. Friedlander, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount* (London, 1911).

¹⁹ For a critical appraisal of the relation of Paul to Jesus and the relative importance of Jewish and Hellenistic influences in Paulinism, see my article, "Continuity and Divergence in the Jesus-Paul Problem," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1929, Vol. 48, parts 3 and 4, pp. 149-61.

²⁰ See R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterie-religionen* (Leipzig, 1910); and S. Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World* (New York, 1929), and *The Mystery Religions and Christianity* (New York, 1921).

modify the Hellenization theory as the basic Jewishness of Paul was recognized. However, the opponents of Hellenization will have to concede that Paul used a Hellenistic idea in defining the Christian religion as a mystical union with Christ. This, even more than the doctrine of justification by faith, is the key to Paul's religious experience; it also defines mystical Christianity. The magical union of devotee and God in the pagan cult became for Paul the spiritual fellowship of the Christian with the living Christ (*ἐν Χριστῷ*).²¹

Another Pauline problem engaging the attention of scholars through the first half of this century was the authenticity of Ephesians and the Pastorals. Earlier critics had questioned all the letters of Paul except Romans, Galatians, and I and II Corinthians. More recently, however, the tendency has been to accept I and II Thessalonians, Colossians, Philipians, and Philemon as also genuine. Great doubt still exists with regard to Ephesians, which many authorities ascribe to a Paulinist.

Goodspeed has suggested that after the writing of Acts (*ca.* 85 A.D.), a close follower of Paul (possibly Onesimus) wrote Ephesians as a summary of Pauline thought and as a means of spreading Paul's influence more widely. The writer modeled his letter after Colossians, with which he was well acquainted, and published a collection of Pauline letters with his own Ephesians as the introduction. According to Goodspeed, the later collections — the Pastorals, the Johannine Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles — show the influence of this Pauline collection, which set the style of grouping books together. Goodspeed's theory has appealed to some as highly plausible (accounting for the similarity of Ephesians and

²¹ See Adolf Deissmann, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (1931).

Colossians), but to others it leaves some questions unanswered.²²

As to the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, opinion has been greatly divided. Conservative scholars, of course, hold to their authenticity, but others, like E. F. Scott, assign them to a Paulinist who edited and enlarged upon some genuine notes of Paul that he had in his possession. The Pastorals are rejected because they cannot be reconciled to Luke's life of Paul in Acts; they reflect an ecclesiastical organization that could only prevail after Paul's time; and their style differs considerably from that of the apostle. Between the extreme positions of total rejection and total acceptance, Scott's theory of fragments seems to be reasonable; namely, that a later follower of Paul worked over some genuine fragments and published them under Paul's name. This theory explains the stylistic differences as well as the intimate notes, which certainly smack of authenticity.²³

4. *The Fourth Gospel*

The Johannine Problem, as related to the Fourth Gospel, loomed large throughout the half-century. It has several facets: authorship, unity, Aramaic nucleus, relation to the Synoptics, and, finally, its reliability as a true representation of Jesus. With few exceptions, the weight of scholarly opinion in the earlier part of the century was against apostolic authorship.

²² See Edgar J. Goodspeed, *New Solutions of New Testament Problems* (Chicago, 1927), and *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago, 1933).

²³ Outstanding among Pauline studies in this period were: "The Acts of the Apostles," *The Beginnings of Christianity*, eds. F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (New York, 1920-33); H. J. Cadbury, *The Meaning of Luke-Acts* (New York, 1927).

It was recognized by most German and American critics that the Fourth Gospel is not historically reliable but represents a speculative interpretation of Jesus to a Hellenistic constituency; it is a reflection of the Philonic doctrine of the Logos, is anti-Jewish, and could only come from the second century.²⁴

More recent discussion, however, seems to have shifted in the direction of the conservative view in regard to authorship and date. Rudolf Bultmann, using the principle of Form Criticism, said the author had three sources: Aramaic sayings of Jesus, miracle stories, and passion narratives. On the basis of a fragment of the Fourth Gospel found in Egypt and dated not later than 125 A.D., Bultmann concluded that the gospel could not have been written later than 100 A.D.²⁵ Middle-of-the-road critics regard the author as John the Elder (mentioned by Papias) or a follower of the apostle John, while the more radical school assigns the gospel to an unknown writer who lived in the vicinity of Ephesus. Strangely enough, some scholars look to rabbinic Judaism rather than to Hellenism for the ideological background to the gospel!

Along with the current resurgence of theology in general, many critics since 1940 have tended to minimize the importance of the historical emphasis and to give more consideration to revelation in their interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.

5. *Old Testament Studies*

Among the significant developments in the Old Testament field during the first half of this century have been the

²⁴ See E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel* (New York, 1906).

²⁵ *Das Johannes-Evangelium* (Göttingen, 1937-41).

archaeological discoveries; the publication of new introductions, commentaries, and histories of Israel; the rise of Form Criticism; and a new interest in Old Testament theology.

Literary criticism was supplemented by an increased knowledge of Hebrew life and religion, made possible by archaeological discoveries. It was now recognized that the Hebrews did not live in a religious vacuum but were influenced throughout their history by the surrounding cultures. The study of cognate languages and Near East religions became an integral part of Old Testament research. Archaeological excavations threw new light on Mesopotamian backgrounds of the Old Testament; on Egyptian parallels to the Wisdom literature; on the Hebrew-Canaanite amalgamation, the Hittite and Hurrian civilizations, and the various periods of Hebrew history; and on the text of Isaiah, the Psalms, and post-Exilic writings.²⁶

Form Criticism, first applied to the Old Testament by Hermann Gunkel in his *Genesis*, has not been as influential, perhaps, as in the New Testament field. In recognizing older forms and traditions in the later-edited books, Form critics were not proposing anything especially new, but they have helped in the pursuit of sources and earlier stages of tradition. Form Criticism has modified the position of the literary school by assigning certain traditions, laws, and literary forms to an earlier period than formerly held.

Gunkel felt that the literary analysis of the written documents was inadequate as a means of determining the religious history of the Hebrews. He maintained that the literary forms present in the later documents came from an earlier age, and were, in turn, taken from pre-Hebrew sources. Hebrew literature developed along certain literary lines (*Gat-*

²⁶ See Part I.

tungen), which came out of "life situations."²⁷ It is clear, however, that Form Criticism is really just an extension of the history-of-religion method in its citation of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian traditions as possible source materials for Hebrew literature.²⁸

Another reaction to the liberal school was seen in the new interest in biblical theology, which rose concurrently with the revival of theology in general and the appearance of Neo-Orthodoxy.²⁹ Attention was now given to the Bible as a whole, as a book about salvation and God, a unified revelation — not just a collection of literary documents with an antiquarian value. How significant this shift is remains to be seen. A study of the Old Testament purely on a topical or theological basis tends to ignore the historical development of ideas and proves less adequate than the older historical method. Even in books on the religious values of the Old Testament, the authors, in order to make sense, had to resort to the evolution of these concepts within the Old Testament itself.³⁰

As a matter of fact, how can there be such a thing as a unified biblical theology per se? In a series of documents appearing over a period of a thousand years, there are *many* theologies. One cannot escape the fact that the Old Testament represents an evolutionary process, without which there

²⁷ *Genesis, Übersetzt und Erklärt* (Göttingen, 1901), and *Einführung in die Psalmen* (Göttingen, 1933).

²⁸ For an objective analysis of Form Criticism and the Old Testament see Herbert F. Hahn, *Old Testament in Modern Research* (Philadelphia, 1954).

²⁹ K. Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (Boston, 1928); *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (New York, 1936).

³⁰ See A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (New York, 1904); A. C. Knudson, *The Religious Teachings of the Old Testament* (New York, 1918); H. P. Smith, *The Religion of Israel* (New York, 1914).

is no life. Current orthodoxy, in decrying the emphasis of the older liberal school on the historical or evolutionary method, finds itself opposing the most valid and most valuable element in the Bible — growth, the progressive achievement of faith, the *élan vital* that is discernible in history. In attempting to discover the unity of the Old Testament as a revelation, scholars of the neo-conservative school have had the tendency to neglect the fruits of historical study. Such a procedure can lead only to a new obscurantism.

The observations of Albright and the methodology of Form Criticism have combined to throw some doubt on the adequacy of Wellhausen's developmental theory. While recognizing the lasting contribution of the Wellhausen school in the reconstruction of literary traditions, many leading scholars feel that the reconstruction of history cannot be solved by literary criticism alone. Many of the Hebrew documents are now regarded as having been written long after the events described, which in the interval had become a part of a growing cultic or ritualistic pattern. Here again there is the danger that exponents of new theories will go too far in their claims. The explanation of Hebrew history on the grounds of cultic usage cannot be maintained without taking into account other factors, such as the influence of environmental cultures, archaeological evidence, and literary criticism.

But the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch has not been discarded by all critics. With certain variations, the Wellhausen tradition was upheld by Robert H. Pfeiffer in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, which, incidentally, was one of the most scholarly publications in America during the half-century.³¹

³¹ *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941). For a review of recent Pentateuchal criticism see H. R. Willoughby (ed.), *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow* (Chicago, 1947).

Certain modifications have been proposed by Form critics who interpreted the Yahwist document strictly in theological terms. Recent criticism has tended to credit J and E with religious and ethical ideas previously thought to have appeared only in the genius of the eighth-century prophets. The tendency has been to establish a definite dependence of the prophets upon the earlier Yahwistic religion. Thus the theological unity of the Old Testament is achieved at the expense of the originality of the prophets.³² Emphasis has shifted from the revolutionary character of the individual prophets to the theological import of the books *in toto*.

In the first half of the century special attention was given to the books of Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The instigator of all this post-Exilic controversy was C. C. Torrey, who maintained that the Book of Ezekiel, rather than being the chief instrument in the making of Judaism and a product of the Exile, was a purely Palestinian forgery from the third century B.C. This view was opposed by W. F. Albright, S. A. Cooke, and others. As for Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, Torrey sees little historical worth in their account of the Exile and the restoration. The Babylonian Captivity, he says, did not take many Jews from Palestine and the story of the restoration, occurring about 538 B.C., is fiction.³³

Form Criticism has also made itself felt in recent research in the Psalms. The typical view of the historical school placed most of the Psalms in the post-Exilic period. The application of both Form Criticism and the method of compara-

³² See H. H. Rowley (ed.), *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, Edinburgh, 1950.

³³ For recent post-Exilic criticism see C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (Chicago, 1910), and *Pseudo-Ezekiel, and the Original Prophecy* (New Haven, 1930); *The Second Isaiah, A New Interpretation* (New Haven, 1928); W. A. Irwin, *The Problem of Ezekiel* (Chicago, 1943); I. G. Matthews, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia, 1939).

tive religion has resulted in establishing a relation between Hebrew usages and the cultus of Egypt, Babylonia, and Canaan. Some of the Psalms are recognized as liturgical chants and ritualistic hymns belonging to the period of the United Monarchy. Much is made of Babylonian and Egyptian parallels. The tendency, therefore, has been to assign many of the Psalms to a pre-Exilic date.⁸⁴

6. At Mid-Century

As we pass the mid-century mark we can identify several contemporary trends in biblical research: the tendency to revert to a more conservative (earlier) dating of the books; a shift in emphasis from the text, which has become fairly well established, to its application to life, both at the time of its composition and today; a greater respect for archaeological findings, especially as they seem to confirm biblical materials; the use of Form Criticism and history of religion in identifying earlier sources for all books; and, finally, a new preoccupation with the theological character of both Old and New Testament books and the Bible as a whole.

By 1950 there appeared a noticeable attempt to establish a doctrinal homogeneity in the Old Testament and a systematic theology of the New Testament.⁸⁵ It was held that the

⁸⁴ See S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* (Kristiania, 1921-24); W. O. E. Oesterly, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms* (New York, 1937); O. R. Sellars, "The Status and Prospects of Research Concerning the Psalms," *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ See F. C. Grant, *An Introduction to New Testament Thought* (New York, 1950); R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen, 1948-51); K. Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Munich, 1948); A. N. Wilder, "New Testament Theology in Transition," *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, *op. cit.*;

time had arrived when we should recognize the uniqueness and unity of the New Testament message. Historicism had had its inning; it had recovered the Jesus of history. Now it was time to recover the Christ of faith. The Jesus of the historians must give way to the God-man of the theologian. The Bible must be seen as a unity and the church recognized as the keeper of the revelation of God and the means of salvation. The dependence of early Christian thought upon previous Jewish teachings and environmental influences was admitted, but syncretism and the developmental approach were made subsidiary to the all-important theological interest.

After dominating the field for a century, the religious-historical method of biblical research was called into question as failing to provide a profound insight into the religious message of the Bible. By mid-century it was felt in many quarters that Historical Criticism had reached the point of diminishing returns and that it was time now for an approach more synthetic than analytic, more sympathetic than objective. Historical and literary criticism, it was held, stopped with the scientific investigation of sources, dates, authorship, and characteristics of the Old and New Testament books. If the Scripture was analyzed like any other literature in history, everything was reduced to the human, the rational, and the secular.

This shift to biblical theology, however, was not a complete return to the traditional view of revelation. It was conceded that human and historical factors are involved in the

S. Minear, *Eyes of Faith* (Toronto, 1946); M. Burrows, *Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia, 1946); A. M. Hunter, *The Unity of the New Testament* (London, 1943); F. Filson, "The Study of the New Testament," *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*, ed. A. S. Nash (New York, 1951).

making of the Scripture and that critical research is necessary, but it was also felt that the critical approach did not give proper emphasis to "God's place in history," "the eternal and final nature of biblical revelation," "the central place of Christ in history," and the over-all theological importance of the Bible. The influence of Barthianism is clearly seen in this revival of theology as a reaction to historicism. It has not gone unchallenged, however, for the liberal-historical school still has its defenders.³⁶

Opponents of the new orthodoxy are still convinced that, while objective historical study can and should include the investigation of the religious life and teachings of the Old and New Testaments, there can really be no such thing as a coherent biblical theology. They also sense the grave danger of attempting to operate without proper use of the critical apparatus provided by historical study. Exclusive emphasis on sin, judgment, atonement, and salvation can only result in the appearance of a neo-Fundamentalism in biblical interpretation.

It is too early to predict what will evolve from the impact of current theories upon traditional ones, but we can be sure that the results of centuries of biblical scholarship will not be entirely discarded in favor of the present vogue. There must be a happy medium between the acceptance of traditional theories as final and the enthusiastic espousal of new methods as providing the answers to all problems. The tendency to adopt new hypotheses to the exclusion of all previous ones suggests that there are styles in biblical scholarship, just as in architecture and automobiles. To follow the most recent

³⁶ See R. E. Wolfe, "The Terminology of Biblical Thought," *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, 1947, pp. 143-47; E. W. Parsons, *The Religion of the New Testament* (New York, 1939); E. F. Scott, *Varieties of New Testament Religion* (New York, 1943).

fashion in the belief that the latest is the best is to lose all historical perspective.

The student of Biblical Criticism, trained in the liberal-historical school, is somewhat startled today when he encounters such terms as empathy, ritual patterns, eschatological symbol, myth and ritual school, *kerygma*, existential dimension, cultic background of eschatology, demythologizing the New Testament, and divine revelation. Such phrases reveal a new slant in interpretation, a type of criticism that has originated largely in European circles and is regarded by its extreme exponents as replacing the historical method.

An appraisal of the current trends is premature at this time, but it may be appropriate to point out certain dangers inherent in the methods of Neo-Orthodoxy, Form Criticism, the Cultic theory, and biblical theology. This conservative turn in American criticism stems from the confessional dogmatism of Europe, especially Germany, and it might be noted that the more ecumenical American theology becomes, the more conservative it has to be.

The chief limitation of the theological approach to Biblical Criticism is its *a priori* procedure. It insists on certain presuppositions or assumptions that must be maintained in spite of passages that would contradict such assumptions or new discoveries that would prove them invalid. One of these preconceptions is that God is manipulating history and that His chief concern is with Jewish and Christian history as revealed in the Scripture. The dogmatic propositions of Augustine and Calvin are read into the Bible as eternal and revealed truth. Finding in the Bible only those passages which serve the current interests of Neo-Orthodox theology is a kind of proof-texting once considered untenable. Those who

follow this method have less interest in the Sermon on the Mount than in the Pauline letters because the latter serve their theology better. The teaching of Jesus about the potentiality of man as a child of God is passed over in favor of Paul's intimations of determinism.

Philosophically speaking, the confinement of God's purpose and activity to one book and to one people appears as an anachronism in our cosmic age. The Neo-Orthodox critics operate within the framework of the church and its dogmas, whereas the liberal school follows a more cultural approach that does not isolate Biblical Criticism from the world of history and science. A greater danger is that Neo-Orthodoxy may find itself unwittingly a part not only of the current antihistoricism but, by reason of its rejection of the rational method, also of the current anti-intellectualism.

As to the more recent Myth, Symbol and Ritual school, there is the danger of attributing to ancient writers a subtlety that they could not have possessed. Were the writers of these primitive accounts consciously using these stories as "symbols of reality," or did they believe in them as facts? Was the New Testament writer in describing the Transfiguration using a "mythological symbol," or was he relating in typical oriental fashion an event that he believed did take place? Is the eschatology of the New Testament, as it is suggested, merely symbolic or cultic in nature, or does it represent an actual hope of first-century Christians? It would seem that some contemporary critics are only reverting to the allegorical method of Alexandria in trying to make a system out of the symbolic theory.

The second half of the century should see a synthesis or compromise, combining the historical and theological meth-

ods.³⁷ The historical approach may have lacked spiritual depth, but, if biblical scholars in the future turn to theology as the dominant method, they will have cut loose from their foundations with the loss of all the great gains of the last two centuries. The direction taken by any individual critic, toward either historical objectivity or theological subjectivity, will be determined by his leanings toward naturalism, on the one hand, or supernaturalism, on the other. It should be possible to combine elements from the two positions.

The wise interpreter will see the Bible as historically conditioned, containing purely transient material along with permanent truths. He will see the Bible, not as a predetermined divine insertion in history, but as an integral part of the historical process. He will understand that the Bible is not an infallible revelation from God, but only a part of man's search for the truth of God. He will be adequately informed in the literary and philological problems of the text, but he will also appreciate the moral and spiritual values of the text for himself and for the modern world.

The wise reader will not forget that the gospels without the gospel are dead and that the intellectual study of the former can mean nothing for the world without the practical application of the latter. While he sees the importance of relating the Book of Amos to its original setting in ancient Bethel, he will also be concerned with the relevance of the prophet's message for his own times. He will always remember that experience precedes literature and that life is deeper than logic. Finally, he will understand that historical analysis must be joined to religious insight for a proper use of this book we call the Bible.

³⁷ Such is the position of Cunliffe-Jones, *The Authority of Biblical Revelation* (London, 1945), and R. M. Grant, *The Bible in the Church* (New York, 1948).

The Chronology of Biblical Literature

Note: The following dates are, in practically every instance, approximate and the list is limited to material found in or directly related to the Bible, including early literary fragments of the Old Testament and extra-canonical works of both the Old and the New Testaments.

Old Testament Literature

Song of the Well (Numbers 21:17 ff)	1200 B.C.
Song of Deborah (Judges 5)	1100
Fable of Jotham (Judges 9:7-15)	1100
Song of Miriam (Exodus 15:21)	Before 1000
Fragment from "Book of Jashar" (Numbers 21:14 ff)	" "
Fragment from "Wars of Jahweh" (Joshua 10:12 ff)	" "
David's Lament (II Samuel 1:19-27)	1013-933
The Parable of Nathan (II Samuel 12:1-4)	"
Code of the Covenant (Exodus 20:23-23:19)	"
"J" Decalogue (Exodus 34)	"
"J" Document	850
"E" Document	750
Amos	750
Hosea	740
Isaiah 1-39	740-700
Micah	725-700
"J" and "E" combined	650

Deuteronomy (promulgated 621)	650
Nahum	630
Zephaniah	630-627
Jeremiah	626-580
Proverbs (an early collection)	621-600
Habakkuk	605
Ezekiel	593-570
Obadiah	580
Lamentations	580
Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)	560
Second Isaiah (Chapters 40-55)	540
Zechariah	520
Haggai	520
Collection of Psalms	520
Judges (final form)	560-500
I, II Samuel (final form)	560-500
I, II Kings (final form)	560-500
"P" document (Priestly Code)	500
Joshua	450-400
Job	450-400
Third Isaiah (56-66)	450
Canonization of the Law (Torah)	444-400
Ruth	430-400
Malachi	420
Joel	400
Jonah	400-300
Song of Songs	300
Nehemiah (edited form)	300
Ezra (edited form)	300
I, II Chronicles (edited form)	300
Proverbs (final collection)	300-250
Septuagint begun	250
Ecclesiastes	250-200
Recognition of Prophets as Canon by	250-200
Esther	200-150
Wisdom of Sirach (Apocrypha)	
(Greek Trans. 132)	180

Tobit (Apocrypha)	175
Song of the Three Children (Apocrypha)	170-150
Daniel	167
Psalms (final collection)	150
First Esdras (Apocrypha)	150
Judith (Apocrypha)	150
Remainder of Esther (Apocrypha)	150
Prayer of Manasseh (Apocrypha)	150-50
Story of Susanna (Apocrypha)	100
Bel and the Dragon (Apocrypha)	100
First Maccabees (Apocrypha)	90-70
Second Maccabees (Apocrypha)	50
Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha)	50 B.C.-40 A.D.
Second Esdras (Apocrypha)	66 A.D.-250 A.D.
Baruch (Apocrypha)	70 A.D.
The Books of the Pseudepigrapha	100 B.C.-200 A.D.

New Testament Literature

I, II Thessalonians	50-52 A.D.
Galatians	53
I, II Corinthians	54-57
Romans	56-58
Philippians	60-64
Colossians	60-64
Philemon	60-64
Ephesians . . . (if non-Pauline: 75-90)	60-64
Gospel of Mark	70
Epistle of James	75-100
Gospel of Matthew	80-90
Gospel of Luke	80-85
Acts	80-100
Hebrews	90
I Peter	90
Revelation	90-100
I Clement (Apostolic Fathers)	95

Gospel of John	100-110
I, II, III John	110
I, II Timothy	125
Titus	100-125
Didache (Apostolic Fathers)	100-125
Jude	110-125
Shepherd of Hermas (Apostolic Fathers)	110-130
Epistles of Ignatius (Apostolic Fathers)	110-120
II Peter	130
Epistle of Barnabas (Apostolic Fathers)	125-130
II Clement (Apostolic Fathers)	150-175
Letter of Polycarp (Apostolic Fathers)	150
New Testament Apocryphal Writings	125-200
Muratorian Fragment (Roman Canonical List)	195-200
Easter Letter of Athanasius (establishing canon)	367

New Testament Chronology

Jesus and Roman-Jewish History

Birth of Jesus	6 B.C.
Death of Herod I	4 B.C.
Philip Tetrarch (to 34 A.D.)	6 A.D.
Annas High Priest (to 15)	6
Caiaphas High Priest (to 35)	18
Pilate Procurator (to 36)	26
Baptism of Jesus	27
Ministry	2½ yrs.
Death of Jesus	29/30
Accession of Caligula (to 41)	37

Life of Paul

Birth of Paul	1 A.D.
Death of Stephen	34
Conversion of Paul	35

First Visit to Jerusalem	38
Second Visit to Jerusalem	44
First Campaign	45-47
Council of Jerusalem	48
Second Campaign	49-52
Felix Procurator (to 57)	52
Third Campaign	52-56
Nero Emperor	54-68
Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea	56-58
Festus Procurator (to 62)	58
Voyage to Rome	58-59
Arrival in Rome	59
Death of Paul	64

Bibliography

NOTE. — In line with the general plan of this book I have limited the bibliography to English titles except in a few instances. The divisions in the following list correspond to the chapters of the book. I have therefore omitted the citation of references dealing with the history, content, and interpretation of the individual books of the Old and New Testaments and other phases of biblical study not included in the present book. No attempt has been made to repeat here all the titles mentioned in the text. Where a volume has pertinent value, however, the title is repeated.

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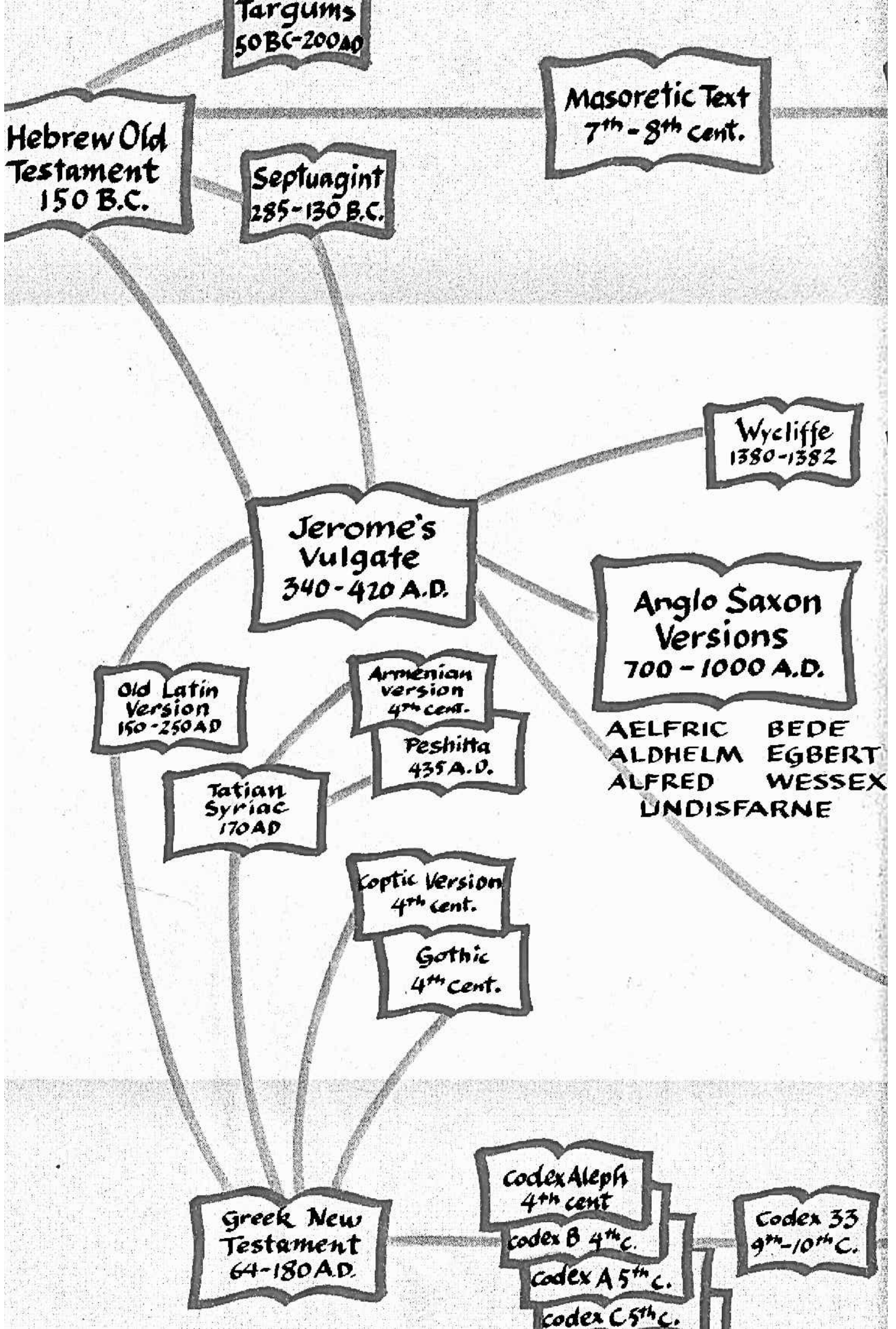
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